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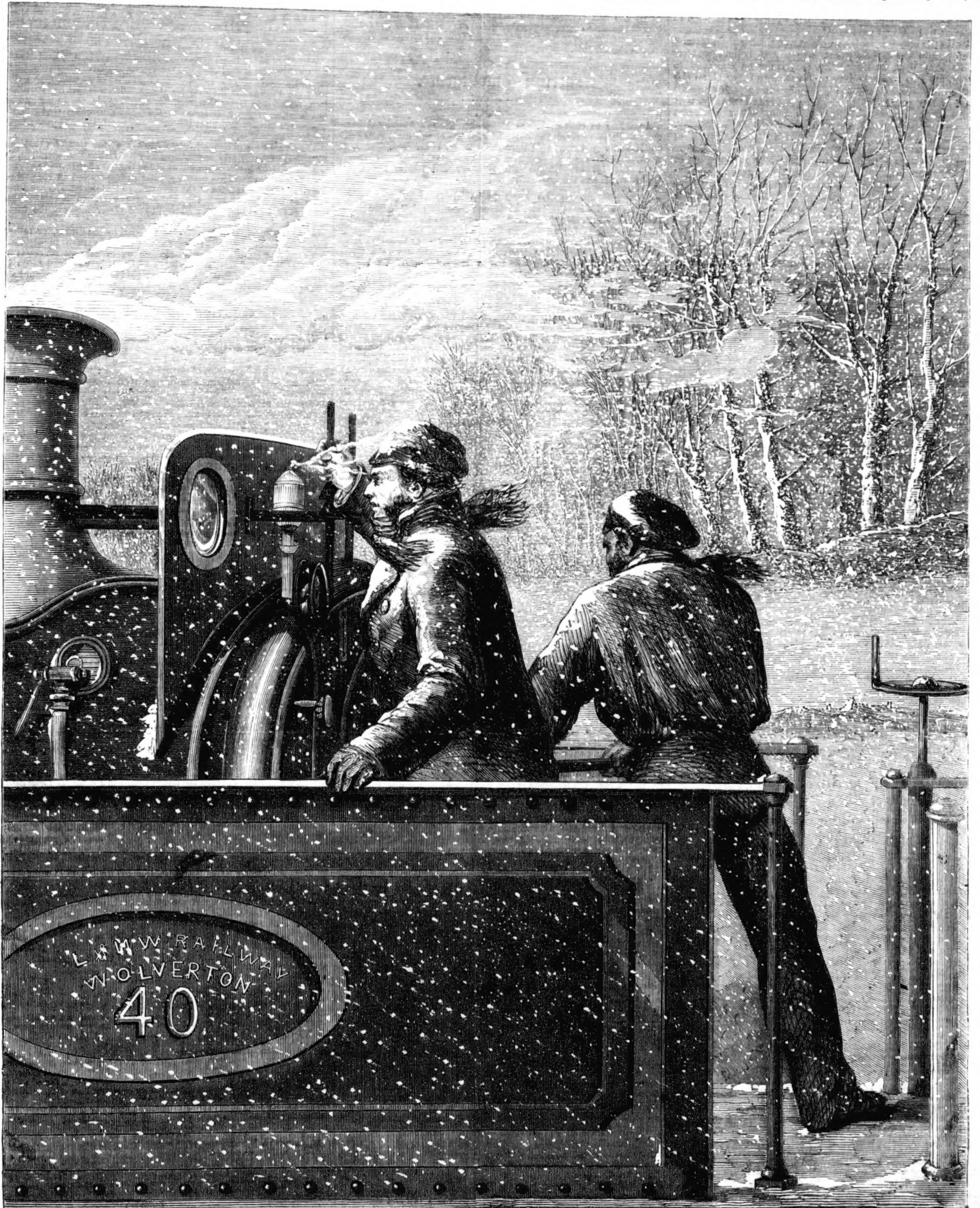
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CHRISTMAS.

MR. FROUDE has well remarked, in one of his admirable historical essays, that the decay of the sports and amusements of a system is, as the withering of a tree's blossoms, a sign that there is death at the roots. Perhaps, some people may

suppose that this is exaggerated, and that if, for instance, the Christmas festival should be palpably waning in Europe, it would prove nothing against the healthiness or solidity of other parts of the Christian system. We cannot agree with them. These things are all related, however subtle the relationship

may be; and when the Christian Day ceases to be celebrated it will be a bad sign, we think, for Christianity itself. Now, the peculiarity of this institution of Christmas is its union of the festal with the religious elements. It is not like the other great days of the "Christian Year," but is emphatically a day of



THE CHRISTMAS EXCURSION-TRAIN.—THE ENGINE-DRIVER.

rejoicing as well as of worship; and in England has much superseded the interest even of the great time of Easter, which is still more prominently celebrated by other Christian nations, and which was anciently one of the three annual periods on which the Kings of England wore their crowns in public, and assembled their Barons. Let Christmas, then, lose its joyous character, and it becomes only a less sacred kind of Sunday. Is it doing this? or likely to do this? and what practical good is yet to be derived from its maintenance? These are questions which have an historical and philosophical kind of interest, and in the absence of political news may serve to amuse our readers now that Christmas has come round once more.

We think, there is no doubt, to begin with, that considerable bodies of people are rather "bored" by the Christmas tradition. In the first place, there is little new literary or artistic fun to be got out of it, and our generation relies more and more for its amusements on the pencil and the pen. Then the winters during the last few years have been singularly tame, damp, sickly kind of affairs, unfavourable to amusement out of doors. Finally, is not the sentiment of kinship a little weaker than it need to be amongst us? Great part of Christmas with our ancestors was always the recognition that "blood was thicker than water"—which people are certainly not so ready to believe, and act upon, as they used to be. Why, may it not be supposed to complain, am I to make believe to love cousin C. or D. on this day, when we are so thoroughly indifferent to each other all the rest of the year? Why should not I spend this day, if it is to be so jolly a one, with those from whom I expect jollity on ordinary occasions? A most reasonable inquiry, when we remember, especially (which is the best of the matter), that our ancestors were not affectionate because they kept Christmas with their relations, but kept Christmas so because they were affectionate. No doubt anything and everything is preferable to hypocrisy, and it would be better to give up the form of the family Christmas than to persist in it as a mere barren form.

But, while these causes of a diminished relish for the day are powerful, there are others supplied by other characteristics of the period, and often effectively worked by writers. There is a good deal of satirical cynicism going about, and plenty of clever fellows ready to treat every prominent manifestation of feeling as "sentimentalism." An occasion when everybody, from old habit, is a little more "sentimental" than usual is too good a chance to be missed by a wag who hopes to gain a reputation for being sharper than mankind generally. To have failed in what is known as "a Christmas book" himself is no mean inspiration, also, to a minor wag—a man one of whose invariable characteristics is a contempt for antiquity and traditions. He would laugh us out of our holly, the only use of which plant, as a wit once said, is "to make his line." Now, against the hypocrite we thankfully admit that the wag is in the right. Against the "sentimentalist" he is not so right, because the over-indulgence of feeling which we censure by that term is at least an exaggeration of a good thing, while cynicism is an exaggeration of something much inferior. But are the great harmless public really either hypocrites or sentimentalists because they somehow, about this time of the year, begin to feel that they ought to be a little more merry and kindly than usual? May not one warm one's feelings, as one does one's hands, by rubbing? Say that we really do not feel so thoroughly the Christmas inspiration as in the middle ages, that it is not so vividly alive in us, what then? Is it a mighty absurdity to coax up the flame a little by talk, by song, by resolute imitation of our more jovial great-grandfathers? We cannot think that there is. Who, for example, does not feel the recent loss of Washington Irving with a little more interest because the news of his death has come just at the approach of the season which he wrote about so admirably? Our age disputes everything, criticises everything, will let nothing pass down to posterity, except after such a testing as people bestow on a dubious-looking siphon. The tendency is inevitable, and its results important. But one consequence of it is that many of the generation fidget themselves unnecessarily about customs and belief, and overhaul their claims to respect for the mere pleasure of the exercise. "Why should I eat mincepies, and go about wishing people the compliments of the season?" We answer, with another question, "Why not?" If there is no danger and no waste of your valuable time in such customs, the mere fact that they exist is at least one ground for following them up, or, at all events, for not exerting yourself to knock them down. These things bind successive generations to each other, child to man, grandson to grandfather, and keep alive the memories of old age. The world need not be so tremendously wise and practical as to do nothing that is not useful and necessary. Something must be conceded to tradition, to habit, to mere "form," if you like, let the sages say what they will, though indeed the highest sages are naturally exceedingly tolerant of simple, kindly, ancient, unpretending things of all sorts.

We, then, as the reader will have guessed, pronounce for Christmas—not for a "spasmodic" but for a quiet, traditional recognition of it. We cannot admit that it is "used up" yet. And if, as is perhaps the case, the disposition to recognise it be a little weaker year by year, let us keep the forms in the hope of a revival of the spirit by and by. We cannot afford to sacrifice even the chance that the name and memory of the festival may be an agent in stimulating the charity of the rich or the cheerfulness of the poor; the kindness of friendship or the claims of blood. If it does this ever so little it ought to be saved from ridicule for the sake of that good. But it really does do it to a considerable extent. Many of our readers will probably wonder that we should have discussed the question, and will stare at a chain of reasoning apparently intended mainly to lead them to a plum pudding. If we can add to the hilarity of their Christmas by even supplying them with a laugh at our expense we are content. But reflective people will see that the kind of impressions we have been contending against are really strong ones; that they bear a distinct relation to important signs of the times, and ought not to be passed over without some examination.

CHRISTMAS EXCURSION TRAINS.

SKETCHES such as we present to our readers under the above title must be essentially of the *genre* school—class pictures. For have we not first, second, and third class? the Royalty, Lords, and Commons of the railway polity. Yet stay. We have forgotten one who is of no class, yet for them all—the engine-driver, and his attendant acolyte, the stoker. A brawny man is he, and well wrapped up to withstand the frost and snow; yea, and a man somewhat stern, though not morose of countenance; for he has responsibilities and anxieties on him, this engine-driver, a weight of duty which he owes to his employers, the company, and to the public, dangers to be surmounted, pitfalls to be avoided; albeit he conducts a train laden with Christmas excursionists,

and the goods-van of which is cumbered with Christmas cases, hampers, baskets of game, Norfolk turkeys, barrels of Colchester oysters, brawn, mincepies, Cambridge sausages, Yorkshire pies, kippered salmon, and similar pledges of friendship and conviviality. The engine-driver's head is very probably full of fog-signals, rapid curves, steep inclines, sudden gradients, "bitter" tunnels, troublesome viaducts, troublesome embankments, and ugly cuttings; to say nothing of awful sidings and intricate approaches to stations.

Beyond the fact that the engine is fiery and sputters a good deal, and may thus be suggestive of snapdragon, there is, in its general aspect, nothing particularly "Christmassy" about a railway-train. There was in the old mail-coaches, the drivers and guards of which were most ardent conservators of Christmas, and exchanged the "compliments of the season," generally in letters of a "liquid" nature, with every passenger, fellow guard and coachman, landlord, ostler, waiter, and chambermaid on the road. Curiously enough, however, railways have at the present moment a very intimate connection with Christmas; and much of the happiness and enjoyment of our Christmas reunions is due to the admirable arrangements made by the railway companies for the conveyance of parties of excursionists at Christmas time. Not only the aristocratic patrons of the first class, but the humbler denizens of the cheaper order of chariots, are benefited by these facilities; and our Artist has well delineated the motley characteristics of the travellers who at Christmas make pilgrims' progresses in quest of beef and turkey, pudding and pie, or, richest fare of all, the faces and society of dear old friends and kindred.

Foreign Intelligence.

FRANCE.

According to custom, Prince Metternich, the new Austrian Ambassador at Paris, received the different members of the diplomatic body on Monday. Princess Metternich will hold her reception next week, after she has been presented to the Empress.

On the 1st of January the Emperor will receive the Corps Diplomatique and the Legislative Bodies.

SPAIN AND MOROCCO.

"On the 16th inst.," says a telegram from Madrid, "15,000 Moors attacked the left redoubt. General Ros de Olano surrounded them with his right wing, and drove them back at the point of the bayonet. Our artillery inflicted great loss upon them. Our troops, as they invariably do, displayed great valour. Generals Gassit and Garcia particularly distinguished themselves. The enemy lost 1500 men; we had 30 killed and 126 wounded."

Notwithstanding the advantages obtained over the Moors we do not find any decisive change in the relative position of the belligerents. Late news from head-quarters announced that O'Donnell, reinforced as he had been by Ros de Olano's division, and having now the whole of his troops in hand, was on the point of assuming the offensive; whereas to the 16th we find that it is still the Moors who are the assailants, and that they attack with the same impetuous bravery, and each time in greater number. As for the loss, as reported in the Spanish bulletins, though probably less than that of the Moors, we cannot accept it as literally correct, particularly as we find the Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish army, whose casualties are reported so trifling, earnestly calling out for reinforcements. O'Donnell now threatens Tetuan. He has declared Ceuta a free port.

The Spanish Government is already compelled, by the uncertain prospects of the Morocco war, to coerce the Bank of Madrid to make an advance of a million pounds sterling on "good securities."

ITALY.

Arrests have been made in Naples, but not, it appears, on account of any insurrection, but rather because acts are imputed which might have led to a disturbance of the peace. The accusation against those who are in custody is, that they have been raising subscriptions for Garibaldi, and printing documents which are not favourable to constituted authority. The Sardinian Consul was arrested, but, as is stated, by mistake.

AUSTRIA.

The report of an intended abdication of the Emperor is totally unfounded. The statement that the Archduke Maximilian would be absent from Austria two years is likewise untrue. The journey of his Imperial Highness to the Brazils will only occupy six months.

In the last Cabinet Council presided over by the Emperor it was resolved that in the next budget a reduction of thirty-eight millions of florins shall be made in the expenses of the War Department. It is stated that Austria is about to proceed to a complete disarmament.

THE GERMANIC DIET.

The secondary States of Germany assembled of late at Wurtzburg have now handed in to the Germanic Diet the scheme of Federal reform which they have concocted. Its main points are as follow:—The publication of the proceedings of the Federal Diet; a common civil and criminal legislation; a common law of domicile; a revision of the Federal military constitution, by increasing the Federal army organically, and not numerically; and the fortification of the coasts of the Northern and Baltic Seas.

RUSSIA.

"The French Ambassador," says a letter from St. Petersburg of the 17th, "has communicated to the Russian Government the wish of his Sovereign that the functions of the First plenipotentiary of Russia at the Congress may be intrusted to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Prince Gortschakoff has replied by telegraph to Paris that he will take into consideration the wish of France."

Mohamet Amit, the principal chief of the mountaineers of the right wing of the Caucasus, has submitted, the consequence of which is the submission of the whole people of that country. The Czar has raised General Bariatski to the rank of Marshal.

THE IONIAN ISLANDS.

The Ionian Parliament is again opened. The Lord High Commissioner made a speech, in which he said that, from observation and inquiry, he had formed an unfavourable opinion of the existing system of administration, and a painful impression of the wants and requirements of the States. To remedy this he had established a system of competitive examination for the departments under his control. He proposed for the consideration of the Parliament an extension of the system of district jurisdiction, in order to afford prompt and cheap justice to the poorer classes. Bills were to be laid on the table of the House to amend the law regarding usury, to regulate the value of the olive crop, to limit the power of arrest in civil action, to permit Colon to dispose of colonial property, to put a stop to the delays which take place in examining witnesses before the magistrates, to punish persons who encourage or who are parties to the desertion of non-commissioned officers and soldiers of her Majesty's forces, to abolish the postal tariff now established, and to return to the old system, to regulate and establish joint-stock banks, &c. &c.

The President of the Assembly said, in reply, "the House is animated by the desire not only of co-operating with your Excellency and the most illustrious the Senate, but also of promoting any measure that may tend to the practical welfare of the people that it represents, and in whom your Excellency evinces so great and lively an interest."

AMERICA.

Both Houses of Congress assembled at Washington on the 5th inst., but, as the House of Representatives had not been organised, the President's message had not been sent in.

The Senate was opened with the usual formalities, and at the first opportunity Mr. Mason, of Virginia, offered a resolution providing for the appointment of a select committee to make a full and searching investigation into all the circumstances connected with the Harper's Ferry outbreak, and also to report what legislation is necessary for the future preservation of the peace of the country and the safety of the

public property. Mr. Trumbull said that he should move to extend the inquiry so as to include an investigation of the circumstances connected with the seizure of the Arsenal at Franklin, Missouri, during the Kansas "border ruffian" war. Mr. Gwin gave notice of a bill for the construction of a railroad to the Pacific. On the following day Mr. Mason's resolution was debated, but without result.

The municipal election in New York took place on the 6th inst., and resulted in the choice of Fernando Wood, Democrat, for Mayor. The election was a most exciting one, there being three candidates in the field, but the day nevertheless passed off quietly.

The *Victoria Gazette* of November 16 says that the United States' troops, with the exception of Captain Pickett's company, had withdrawn from the island of San Juan, by order of General Scott.

THE AFFAIRS OF ITALY.

According to the *Pays* the opening of the Congress will definitely take place on the 20th of January. The same paper also publishes the following as a definitive official list of the Plenipotentiaries who will represent the great Powers in the Congress:—"Count de Rechberg and Prince de Metternich for Austria. Lord Cowley and Lord Wodehouse for Great Britain. Baron Schleinitz and Count de Pourtales for Prussia. Prince Gortschakoff and Count de Kisseleff for Russia. Spain will be represented by M. Martinez de la Rosa and M. Mon. Portugal by Count de Lavradio and Viscount de Pavia." It adds that "the names of the Plenipotentiaries for the Holy See, the Two Sicilies, Sardinia, and Sweden are not yet officially known."

According to the latest news from Rome and Paris, Cardinal Antonelli will represent the Pope; and the Vienna journals give out that he is assured beforehand of "triumphant success." In an autograph letter from the Pope to the Emperor his Holiness declares that he is willing to be represented at the Congress, having full confidence in the loyalty and firmness of the Eldest Son of the Church, to whom God has intrusted the mission to protect the patrimony of St. Peter against illegal covetousness.

The Swiss Federal Council intends to ask at the Congress that the neutrality of Savoy may be guaranteed by the Italian Confederation, as it already is by Piedmont in virtue of the treaties of 1815.

At Stockholm there has been a popular demonstration in support of Sweden being represented at the Congress, so that she may record her votes in accordance with the wishes of the Italian people. The Swedish Diet has adopted an address to the Government in the same sense.

As to Garibaldi, his last effort is an appeal to the ladies, or rather the women, of Italy. This proclamation is written in dignified language, and is intended to induce those whom he now addresses to give all their superfluities in defence of the holy war, and to do it without stint, seeing that the powerful ones of the earth would bow before the millions that could be spared from their savings.

EXECUTION OF JOHN BROWN.

THE execution of John Brown, for the Harper's Ferry insurrection, took place at Charleston, Virginia, on the 2nd inst. On the previous day he had an interview with his wife. A strict watch was kept over them while they were together; and they seemed to have afforded the gaoler an unusual spectacle of Christian fortitude; both were perfectly self-possessed throughout, maintaining their composure even at the moment of parting. Their conversation mainly turned upon family affairs, the disposition of Brown's property, the education of his children, and so on. The death of his two sons was spoken of. Mrs. Brown told him that she had made some effort, whilst at Harper's Ferry for the recovery of their bodies. Brown thereupon suggested that it would be best to take his body, with the bodies of his sons, and get a pile of pine logs, and burn them all together. This his wife would not listen to.

Before leaving the gaol, Brown had an interview with his fellow-prisoners in the same cause. Some of them he encouraged, others he reproved for making false statements.

The prisoner's arms were then pinioned; "and, with a black slouch hat on, and the same clothes he wore during the trial, he proceeded to the door, apparently calm and cheerful. As he came out the six companies of infantry and one troop of horse, with General Taliaferro and his entire Staff, were deploying in front of the gaol, whilst an open wagon with a pine box, in which was a fine oak coffin, was waiting for him. He looked round, and spoke to several persons he recognised, and, walking down the steps, took a seat on the coffin box along with the gaoler Avis. He looked with interest on the fine military display, but made no remark. The wagon moved off, flanked by two files of riflemen in close order. On reaching the scaffold he walked up the steps firmly, and was the first man on the gallows. Avis and Sheriff Campbell stood by his side, and, after shaking hands and bidding an affectionate adieu, he thanked them for their kindness. The cap was then put on his face, and the rope round his neck. Avis asked him to step forward on the trap. He replied, 'You must lead me; I cannot see.' The rope was adjusted, and the military order given, 'Not ready yet.' The soldiers marched, countermarched, and took position as if an enemy were in sight, and were thus occupied for nearly ten minutes. The prisoner standing all the time, Avis inquired if he was not tired. Brown said, 'No, not tired; but don't keep me waiting longer than necessary.' He was swung off at fifteen minutes past eleven. A slight grasping of the hands and twitching of the muscles were seen, and then all was quiet. The body was several times examined, but the pulse did not cease until thirty-five minutes had passed. The body was then cut down, placed in a coffin, and conveyed, under military escort, to the dépôt, where it was put in a car, to be carried to the Ferry by a special train at four o'clock. All the arrangements were carried out with great precision and military strictness."

Previously to the execution, we are told, the rope was publicly exhibited at the Sheriff's office. The fact that the rope was made of South Carolina cotton was pointed out with exultation. "No Northern hemp," said the Sheriff, "shall help to punish our felons." In many parts of the Northern States minute-guns were fired, flags hung half-mast, and sympathy meetings held. The most important demonstration in Boston took place in the Legislature, where motions to adjourn were made, both in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Strong expressions were used. One speaker compared Virginia to a pirate ship, and thought that slaves should be delivered on land as well as at sea. Another considered the Governor of Virginia guilty of wilful murder, and thought that the hanging of Brown would be the hanging of the whole State of Virginia. In the end, however, both Houses refused to adjourn.

THE ROUNDHAY MURDER.

CHARLES NORMINGTON, a labourer, eighteen years of age, was tried at York on the 15th inst. for the murder of Richard Broughton, near Leeds. Our readers must remember this case. Broughton, who was an old man, was set upon by two ruffians, beaten, and robbed of a German silver watch. The poor old man, blinded in his own blood, staggered home and died. It was proved that Normington pawned the stolen watch shortly after the murder; and he acknowledged that he was hard by at the time of the murder, and saw a man named Pollard beat Broughton. He was sentenced to death. When the Judge assumed the black cap a shriek ran through the court—it proceeded from the prisoner's mother, and at the conclusion of the sentence the poor creature's screams were heartrending. The criminal swooned on being removed from the dock. During the hearing of the trial, however, he maintained the greatest calmness.

STRIKES AND BENEFIT SOCIETIES.—The Marlborough-street magistrate has delivered an important decision on a point affecting working men on strike or lock-out. One Robert Watt summoned the president of a masons' benefit society for expelling him from future participation in the benefits on the ground that, contrary to rule, he belonged to another society. The facts were not disputed. Watt did belong to two societies; but he contended "trade fund," and not to the "trade and sick fund." The magistrate, however, held that the rules of the masons' benefit did plainly prohibit any member from belonging to any other society which proposes and affects the same purposes; and he therefore dismissed the summons.

IRELAND.

A WELL-CONDUCTED MURDERER.—If the following paragraph, originating in a Dublin paper, be well founded, it would seem that in these latter days wife-killers are the most lucky of all criminals amenable to the laws of the United Kingdom:—"Kiwran, who was sentenced to death some years ago for the murder of his wife on Ireland's Eye, and whose sentence was commuted to transportation for life, and who was finally deported to Bermuda, has obtained, through the energetic and enduring sympathy of his friends at home, a further commutation of his sentence; and on a report of his 'very proper conduct' while in foreign parts he has been liberated, and will be allowed to return home."

TRANSFORMATION OF THE IRISH CONSTABULARY.—The *Kilkenny Moderator* reports the conversion of the Irish constabulary from a civil to a military body:—"An order has been issued for five sub-inspectors, sixteen head-constables, and a proportionate number of constables of the Irish Constabulary Force to proceed to Hythe for instruction in the use of the Enfield rifle, preparatory to arming the force with that weapon."

MEETING OF IRISH MEMBERS.—A meeting of Irish members was held on Thursday week, at the Northumberland Hotel, Dublin, "for the purpose of taking measures to promote the policy enunciated by the Catholic Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland in their pastoral address published on the 5th of August." The chair was taken by M. E. Corbally, M.P. for Meath. The other members present were—R. M. Bellew, J. A. Blake, Dr. Brady, J. Pope Hennessy, John Lanigan, Edward McEvoy, J. F. Maguire, Patrick O'Brien, The O'Donoghue, and Colonel White. Reporters were not admitted. The first resolution pledged the meeting to press upon the Government the just demands contained in the pastoral address of the Catholic Bishops and Archbishops of Ireland published last August; the second advocated the principles of free separate education; the third assented to such a control and inspection by the Government of the funds allocated to public education as would ensure that they were not misappropriated; the fourth upheld tenant-right as the measure of all measures calculated to promote the material happiness and social prosperity of Ireland; the fifth asserted the right of Catholic soldiers and sailors to the same religious privileges as Protestants; the sixth demanded an improvement in the administration of the Irish Poor-law Board; the seventh declared that any Government which attempts to interfere or to countenance an attack upon the temporal sovereignty of the Holy Father is unworthy of the confidence of the Irish people and support of their representatives.

ORANGE DEMONSTRATION.—The Dublin Protestant Association have held an aggregate meeting. It was called to pronounce upon the existing crisis, and Sir E. Grogan, M.P., was in the chair. Loud cheers and Kentish fire saluted the expression of his views, all the more loud and Kentish as he proceeded to accuse the Roman Catholic orators of making use of disrespectful and treasonable language towards the Queen and Constitution.

SCOTLAND.

THE ITALIAN QUESTION.—The people of Glasgow are signing a memorial to Lord John Russell expressing their satisfaction that the foreign policy of the empire is under his Lordship's direction at this critical time, and particularly enforcing upon his attention his own declaration that England should, when in Congress, insist upon the Italian people governing themselves. The memorialists urge that Great Britain should demand the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Italian soil, so that foreign intervention in that unhappy country may be at an end. The memorialists ask that England should suffer no undue delay in the affairs of the Congress. "It is," they say, "the great question of European liberty which is at stake."

THE PROVINCES.

A CLERGYMAN FINED FOR AN ASSAULT.—At the Guildhall, Newcastle-under-Lyme, last week, the Rev. F. E. B. Swann, Curate of St. Giles's, was charged with assaulting his maid servant. The rev. gentleman admitted that he had given the girl a slap, and that he would do the same again under the circumstances; if this constituted an assault in the eyes of the law, then was he guilty. But, with equal propriety, any child punished in school might bring a charge against the master or mistress. The blow was given in consequence of the gross impudence of the servant. Elizabeth Garner then deposed—I was in the kitchen this morning, about seven o'clock. Mr. Swann came in, and gave me a violent slap in the face. Defendant—Which is abominably false. I gave you a slight one. Witness—He said it was for not bringing him any coals into his room. I told him I could not do so, as his room-door was locked. He then said I had nothing in my hands when I came to the door, and hit me very hard. Defendant—I am grossly false. I gave her a slight slap. Witness—The mark on my nose and the discoloration of the eye are the effects of the blow. My nose bled copiously. Defendant—I did not strike you on that side. I wish the case was done with. A matter of a little slap! Why can't I be fined—I admit the thing! Witness—When he struck me he said, "Take that, and go and fetch a summons." Defendant—The thing is most absurd. If there is a fine to be imposed, I wish to pay it, if I can. I have nothing more to say. Such an absurd, ridiculous thing as this! She says nothing about her own insolence—the provocation given. But I am not going to have any altercation with a creature like that; it isn't worth my while. This is Newcastle gratitude for what I have done for it. The Mayor—I exceedingly regret to see you in this position, but it is not the first case of a like nature. Unfortunately, only ten days back I had to issue a warrant against you for an assault on another servant. That case was withdrawn. This, however, is plainly proved, and you are fined £1 and costs; in default one month's imprisonment. The fine was paid, and Mr. Swann left the room saying, "I have done with Newcastle now."

DESTRUCTION OF THE GENOA STEAM TRANSPORT.—The Genoa iron steam-ship, the property of the Sardinian Steam Navigation Company, had been recently taken up by the Spanish Government as a transport for the conveyance of troops and ammunition to Morocco. She arrived at Malaga from Alicante, on her way to Morocco, on the 3rd instant, having on board 200 soldiers, 159 miles, 350 tons of gunpowder, 100 cases of grenades, and 200 cases of cartridges. Two hours after she had anchored an accident occurred by some grenades igniting, which injured three men. This was followed by an explosion, and the after part of the ship burst into flames. The troops and crew made for the boats and succeeded in getting away, but on the news of the outbreak and the character of the ship's cargo reaching the inhabitants a panic seized them, and they fled from the town. The ships of war moored in the bay at once commenced firing into the hull of the burning steamer, and eventually sunk her before the fire could reach the large store of ammunition and powder. All the mules were burnt.

FATAL BOILER EXPLOSION.—A boiler in the Magdalen Institution at Liverpool burst on Monday, in consequence of the ice that filled the feeding-pipes. One woman was killed on the spot, another died in the course of the day, and several others are so much injured that small hope is entertained of their recovery. On Monday the boiler attached to the kitchen-range of a Mr. Sharpe, of Liverpool, also exploded. The servant maid was greatly injured.

SYMPATHY WITH THE POPE.

The sympathy of English Roman Catholics for the Pope begins to show itself largely. The lay members of this Church have just published a sweeping declaration in his favour; it concludes as follows:—

We protest against the wrong done to the Holy Father by depriving him of his territories. We protest against the wrong done to all Catholics by the attempt to compromise the independent exercise of the Pope's spiritual power, of which his temporal sovereignty is the safeguard. We protest against the rebellion of a portion of his subjects in the Romagna as unjustifiable, and against the aid given to them by foreign incendiaries, and by invaders from neighbouring States, as well as by European statesmen and Rulers, as injurious to religion and dangerous to the peace of the world and to the security of all Governments. Further, we protest against every infringement of the Holy Father's rights as an independent Sovereign. We protest against any assumption on the part of any other State or Ruler, or of any Congress of States, to dispose of the Holy Father's territories, or to impose upon him any conditions against his own will; being persuaded that both justice and expediency dictate that any changes in the laws or administration of his dominions should be left to his own unfettered judgment and unquestioned benevolence. Especially we protest against the power or influence of our country being used—whether in a Congress of European States or separately—in favour of the Holy Father's rebel subjects, or to depose him of his dominions, or to interfere with his independent sovereignty, by imposing any conditions upon him. And we hereby make known our determination to resist and resent, in the spirit of the Constitution, any such course on the part of the responsible advisers of the Crown, to whatever party in the State they may belong.

The Roman Catholic clergy of Salford, who have had a meeting on the same subject, agreed to an address which is much more modestly worded; and yet here the right of the Pope to rule over those who don't wish it is called "inalienable," and the people who determine to assert their independence are called "wicked." It is asserted that the real object of those who seek the abrogation of the temporal functions is to pull the Church down altogether.

A CHRISTMAS SONG AT SEVENTY YEAR.

Sing you a song? God bless you all!

And what is the song that I should sing?

The winds in the young trees, leafy and tall,

Make music worth the listening;

But when the boughs are broken and bare,

And the last brown leaf has fluttered away,

Nor rain, nor shine, nor the sweetest air

That ever in June made holiday

Wakes music more; but solemn and still,

With arms that blindly seek the sky,

The old tree hearkens to axe and bill,

And the woodman's footstep rustling by.

Sing you a song, my little one?

And thou, old mother? Alas, my dear,

All songs are sad at seventy year;

But if you ask it shall be done.

Then hark! Ay, hark! There, break the chimes!

Ring out, old bells! your song is mine!

Fit ye my blundering speech with rhymes,

With heart and thought I'll dower thine!

But, ah! my heart too soon is full—

Thought-logged, the poor old craft; for she

Is only a bulk, and her helm is dull,

And all too heavily rolls the sea.

Mine eyes are blinded with the spray—

I can no more. Sweet bells, do you

Sing all the song yourselves; I pray

You furnish rhyme and reason too.

Soft and far-fallen be the chime,

And then these little ones shall hear

Of Sabbaths in an olden time,

And the lady my mother, so young and dear,

Who by the hand me gently led

A-churchward, many a solemn morn,

To hear that Christmas story read

Of Him who for our sakes was born!

And tell of the thoughts I thought in the church,

Of the butterfly fluttering in the porch,

And the peeping ivy that whispering said—

"Hush! hush!" when the people knelt and prayed.

So slow? Why, then, you must, I fear:

A-churchward now with a funeral bier:

At twenty-five, she, dead and drear;

And here sit I at seventy year.

Ah, toll no more! Break out again

The joybells—rudely stammering,

All overjoyed! Old wife! again

These are our wedding-bells that ring!

'Twas a good song; I think, almost,

The echoes are not wholly lost;

But some, to heaven ascending, wait

To greet our spirits at the gate.

Then peal your loudest! and louder and higher!

Dead is many a festive fire,

And many a hope and many a bliss

Sits by a cold hearth, emberless.

But still we've a log on our homely hearth;

And heaven is home as well as earth!

So finish the song, old bells! with a swing,

And a clamour of Christmas caroling,

And if in the boisterous notes be blent

Some touch of an old man's passing knell,

Therewith we'll strive to be content:

And all is ended fair and well!

FREDERICK GREENWOOD.

A CHRISTMAS BALL IN BETHLEM HOSPITAL.

THE announcement of a ball in Bedlam seems, at the first blush, almost as much an anomaly as a fancy fair in Pentonville Penitentiary, or a flower show at Charing-cross Hospital. A retrospective glance, however, at the modern treatment of lunacy, and at the gentle and soothing remedies now brought to bear on that unhappy disease—methods which have been marvellously successful in alleviating its pangs, if not in mitigating its severity and arresting its progress—will convince us that a soiree dansante in our great civic hospital for lunatics is a perfectly rational and desirable adjunct to the system of treatment adopted by the learned, skilful, and eminently benevolent men who have made mental maladies their study, and have devoted their time and energies to the painful and laborious task of the care of the insane.

Although comfort, kindness, and healthful relaxation are now the rule in well-conducted lunatic asylums, in lieu of the old, horrible régime of whips, gags, manacles, strait-waistcoats, chains, straw beds, dark cells, revolving chairs, violent shower-baths, and more violent purgatives—although even the mufflers and the padded room are fast disappearing from lunatic practice, and are only resorted to in cases of homicidal, suicidal, and hysterical mania—there is yet omnipresent in the best-appointed receptacles for demented persons a lowering gloom of pain and melancholy. Decorate the place with pictures and busts as you may, furnish the wards with books and journals, with chess and draught boards, with embroidery frames and appliances for drawing and painting, you cannot banish that pervading melancholy, that lonesome *distresse*, that ineffaceable sense of deprivation and bereavement. It is clear that amusements of a sedentary nature, albeit very quieting and very consolatory, will not wholly vanquish desolation and ennui. Very many torpid minds and flagging spirits require more active recreation—they stand in need of being aroused—they want a spur, a fillip, an increase of vitality; and, to meet this desirable end, there could not, we think, have been devised two modes of diversion more excellent than those adopted by the wise and philanthropic guardian of the patients in Bedlam—namely, the amusement of a billiard-room for the males, and a ball-room for the patients of either sex.

The ball-room at Bethlem Hospital is a spacious apartment in the wing corresponding to that in which the billiard-room is situated, and is lighted by large louvre windows. On festive occasions it is very prettily decorated, and might vie with many a more pretentious and high-sounding area for the display of the Terpsichorean art. During the autumn and winter months balls are constantly given to the inmates, who seem thoroughly to enjoy the innocent and cheerful amusement provided for them. The admirable medical officers of the establishment, the superintending physicians (Dr. Hood and Dr. Helps), join the patients at these entertainments, and, without being precisely masters of the ceremonies, decidedly tend by their presence to conduce to the observance of etiquette and urbanity. Nothing that could be stigmatised as wildness or extravagance is perceptible in the attire of the patients, male or female, who join in the quadrilles and polkas. There is nothing to remind us of the "Bedlam" of Hogarth, with its poor driving maniacs, with latten swords, rusen crowns, and paper tiaras; nor of the etching of the exterior of the old building in Moorfields by that quaint London antiquary, J. T. Smith, where a madman has let a wooden sword and a foolscap down by a string from his grated window into the ditch below. On the other hand, it is on these ball nights easy to discover that the dancers have understood and appreciated the occasion, and have made some neat or pretty alteration in their dress in consequence.

The various dances, including those of the most "fashionable" character, are kept up, as may be judged from our Engraving (see page 432), until a reasonable hour, and with great animation. At intervals between the figures refreshments are handed round, consisting of home-made wines, ales, cake, fruit, biscuit, &c. Again it is to be

observed that the greatest order and decorum are manifested by the patients while these dainties are being distributed. They are their own musicians, too, and manage to form a capital band, often playing with great taste and spirit. The proceedings terminate with "God save the Queen," and a general "Good night," and the dancers, tired out and happy, retire to rest. Such is the mere outline of a ball in Bedlam. At Christmas time it may be a little more festive in character than at other seasons; but the general features of the entertainment we have faithfully delineated are preserved.

Seeing these poor crazy people—many of them young and comely, all of them peaceful and well-behaved—thus dancing and making merry, one feels inclined to ask whether they be really mad, and whether it might not be expedient forthwith to unlock the gates of Bedlam and let the patients loose on the world again. Alas! we do but see the sunny side of a very sad, wretched picture of humanity. The patients who dance and make merry are only those who are "well enough" to come. Some of them, to-morrow, may be howling and flinging their limbs about in dreadful convulsions. Others, and they are present at the ball to-night, take no part in the dance, but, albeit perfectly placid and quiescent, sit on the surrounding benches, their hands folded, their poor blank eyes looking five thousand miles away, utterly abstracted, indifferent to, or insensible of, that which is passing around them. You feel in the midst of the merriment that there is something wanting, that the wine is corked, that the cake has a leaven of madness in it, that there is only elevenpence-halfpenny out of the shilling in the pockets of the dancers, that there is a tile off the roof of the ballroom.

POULTRY FARM.—FATTENING POULTRY FOR THE CHRISTMAS MARKET.

It had long been a matter of wonderment to us, and of mental inquiry, as to where all the turkeys, geese, ducks, and other poultry come from that are sacrificed daily, and more especially at the present season of the year, on the altar of gastronomy. Christmas time set us thinking over the question more than ever. Possibly our mind was diverted into this channel of thought by visions of the fat turkey or goose it may be our own lot to dismember on the 25th of this month. Be this as it may, acting upon some information received, we put a sketch-book in our pocket the other day and took the train to Blackheath and the omnibus to Eltham. We apprehend that most of our London readers know Eltham, if only from its possessing the remains of a palace of the middle ages—the Palace of King John, as it is called—now serving as a barn or lumber-house. But our errand had nothing whatever to do with the ruins of palaces, though it had something in connection with barns. An invitation to visit Mr. Howard's "Poultry Farm" had taken us down to Eltham.

Some ten minutes' walk brought us to the place we were in search of, and that without making any inquiry, for a grand open-air concert performing by the poultry sufficiently indicated the direction we were to pursue. In the midst of some beautiful meadow land stood one of the most compact and well-ordered farms we ever set eyes upon, as far as regards the buildings and arrangements, but swarming with a most disorderly and unmannerly crew. Fancy, good readers, a matter of 8000 geese and ducks gabbling and waddling about in a perfect state of freedom and unrestraint, all of them apparently bent on making the most of the short time that was spared them before gracing the spit. The farmyard itself was a most wonderful sight; it seemed to heave and move with its feathered occupants; not a vestige of the ground was to be discerned—nothing but white backs heaving and tossing like breakers on a sandbank. As we made our appearance dinner was about being served to the 8000 voracious long-necked gluttons, and the distribution of food was the signal for a babel of noises perfectly deafening. All these birds were being fattened for the Christmas market—rather a costly process, for they consume amongst them weekly 170 quarters of oats and barley and seven loads of grain.

We now come to the question of where do all these ducks and geese come from?—the question that we started with. They are not bred at Park Farm; that is not Mr. Howard's business; all he does is to conduct them through a preparatory course of training that will in the end benefit them to take their place at any table. They are brought in the first instance by hundreds from Pomerania in Prussia, Holland, and Belgium; and, after undergoing a course of instruction in the art of good living at Eltham, give us the benefits of their acquirements in return for the outlay of a few shillings.

UNPACKING GAME AND POULTRY IN LEADENHALL MARKET.

HAVING seen the geese and ducks at Mr. Howard's preparatory school for young poultry, we determined to pay a visit to that gentleman's establishment at Leadenhall Market, where his pupils make—not a ghostly, but a substantial, reappearance after death. What an insatiable ogre this London must be! We are told that in 1854 100,000 geese, 200,000 ducks, 104,000 turkeys, 400,000 pigeons, 125,000 partridges, &c., &c., found their way down the throat of the hungry monster—and all these out of Leadenhall Market. On the morning we chose for our tour of inspection great preparations were being made for Christmas. Mr. Howard and his assistants were all employed unpacking hampers containing every description of the feathered tribe. There were baskets of game from private estates; baskets of turkeys from France, Hamburg, Ireland, Yorkshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire; baskets of snipes, larks, woodcocks, and plovers; baskets of geese, ducks, and fowls; and baskets of almost everything that flaps a wing. Why, during last week Mr. Howard received from various parts of the kingdom and from the Continent as much as 219 tons 11 cwt. of birds, rabbits, and hares; and one morning the railways brought him 59 tons 18 cwt. Of course the amount of trade must be enormous. From 4000 to 5000 turkeys will be sold this Christmas Eve.

Leadenhall Market may really take rank as one of the most extraordinary of the Christmas sights in London; and those who have not seen it had better hasten at once before its decorations are claimed for the spit.

EXTRAORDINARY FRAUD ON A BLANK BILL.—The Court of Common Pleas was occupied for three days last week with the case of *Oakley v. Mussehood-Dean*, which was an action to recover the sum of £5500 on a bill of exchange. The plaintiff was a young man possessed of considerable property in Yorkshire, and the defendant was the Moulvie of the late King of Oude, whom he accompanied into England in 1856 for the purpose of pressing his Majesty's claims on the English Government. Amongst other persons who obtained access to the embassy was Mr. Henry Chard, the drawer of the bill in question. The Moulvie being in want of money, Chard advanced various sums amounting to £1100. Chard produced five stamped papers, which the defendant signed in blank, and some time afterwards was apprised that Chard held an acceptance of his for £5500. The plaintiff was informed by an agent named Roy that the defendant was anxious to raise money for the purposes of the embassy, and it was arranged that the plaintiff should advance the sum of £5000 upon a bill of exchange, to be given by Chard, who was represented as the agent of the embassy. The loan was negotiated by Mr. Roy, who went with Chard to see the Moulvie on the subject. Chard produced the bill before the Moulvie, and said, "A client of ours has agreed to advance £5000 on your acceptance for £5500." The Moulvie, who was smoking his cigar, looked at the bill, and made a guttural sound, which Roy took to be an approval of the terms proposed, and gave Chard a cheque for £5000. The jury found a verdict to the effect that the bill was fraudulently obtained; and that Mr. Roy took it under circumstances from which he ought to have known that it was tainted with fraud.

THE ACCIDENT AT THE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTION.—In the Court of Common Pleas three persons have obtained verdicts against the directors of the Polytechnic Institution for damages sustained during the fall of the staircase in that building last January. The question was, did the accident arise from an original defect in the staircase—in which case the defendants would not be liable—or from an improper mode of repairing it? The jury thought that the accident arose from the mode of repairing the staircase, whereby the stone steps were weakened. One plaintiff got £150; the others £25 each.

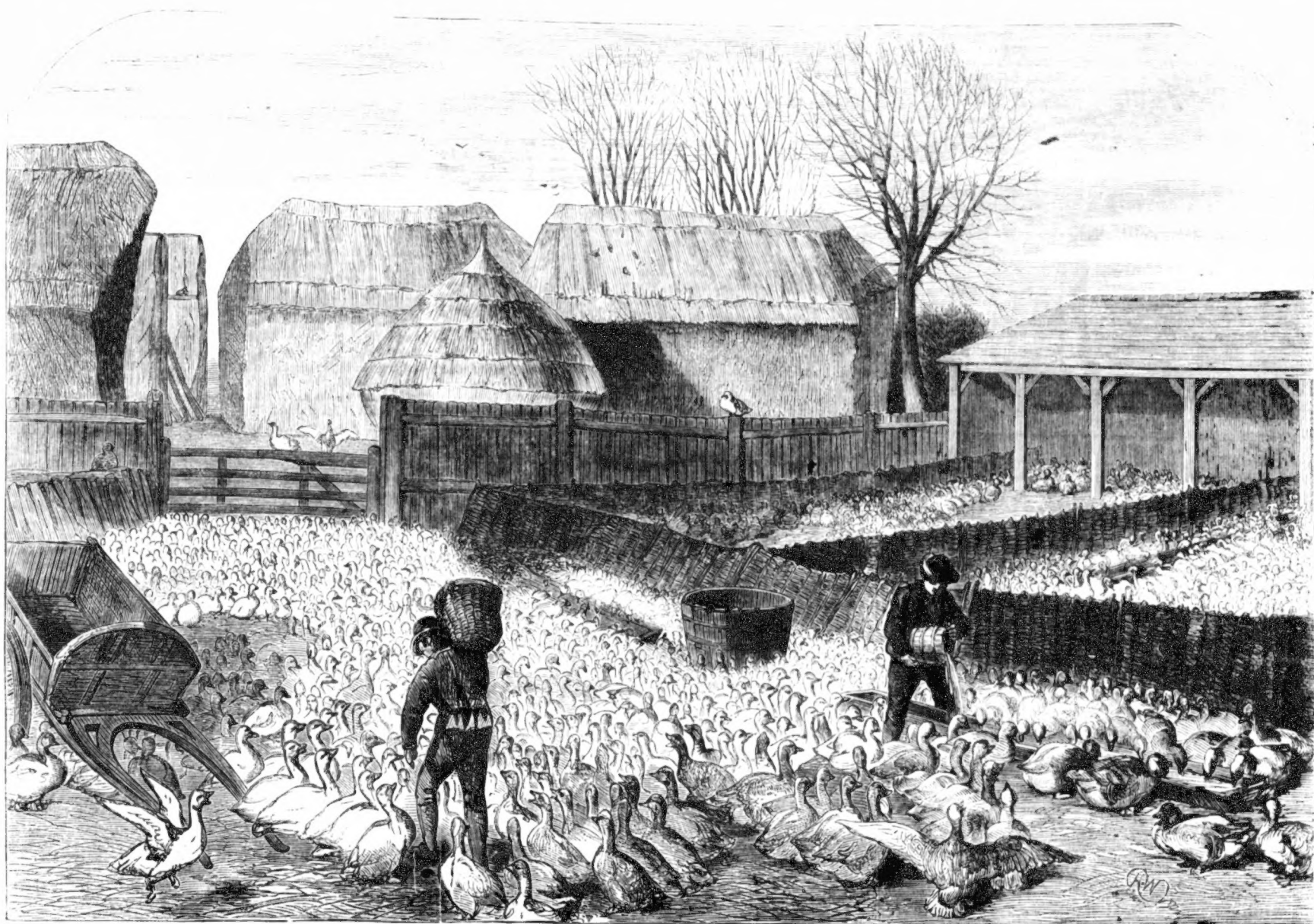
A NEW WEEKLY SIXPENNY PAPER, entitled the *Army and Navy Gazette*, is announced. The editor is Mr. W. H. Russell.



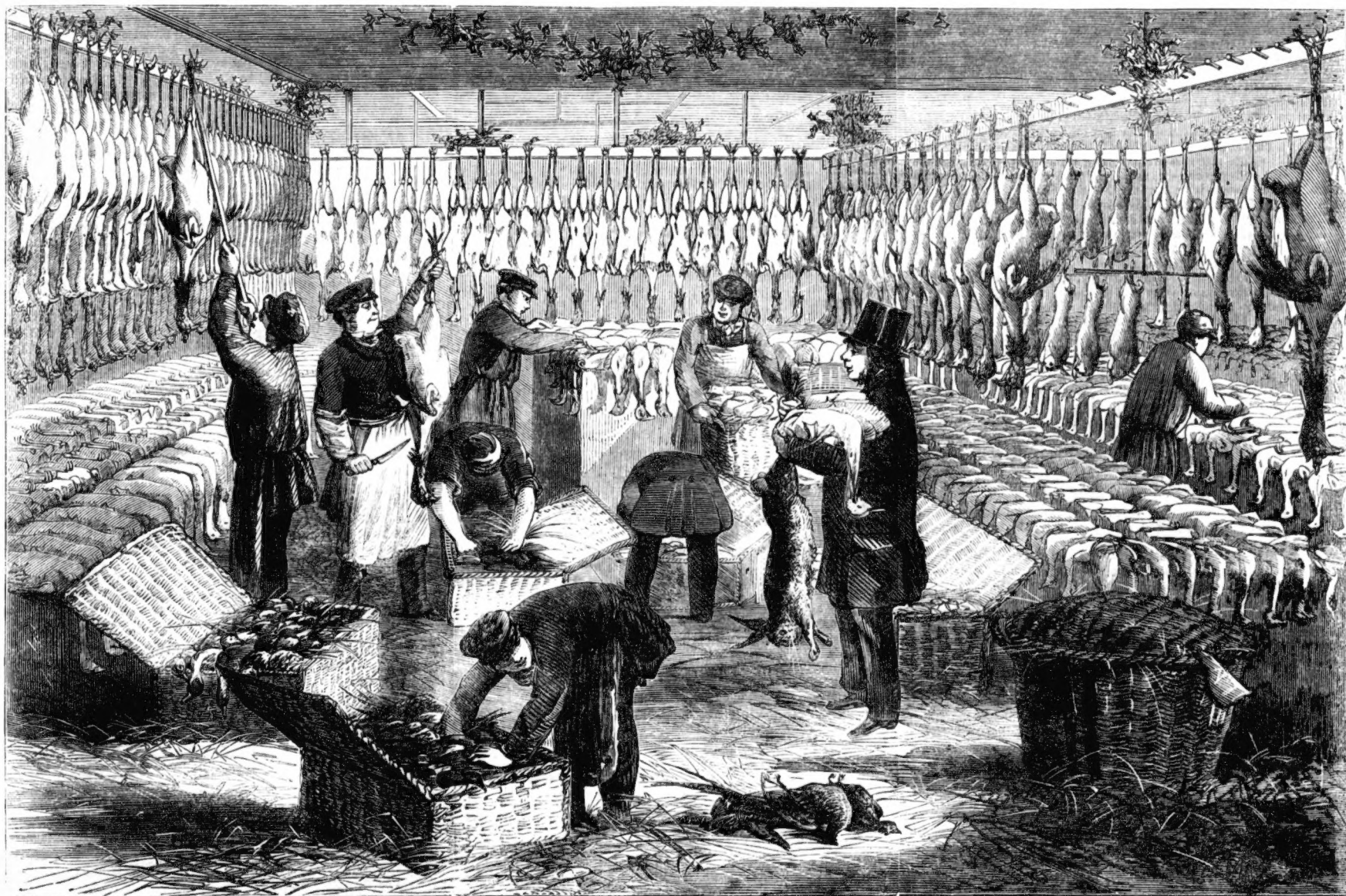
THE CHRISTMAS EXCURSION-TRAIN.—FIRST CLASS.



THE CHRISTMAS EXCURSION-TRAIN.—SECOND CLASS.



A POULTRY FARM.—FATTENING POULTRY FOR THE CHRISTMAS MARKET.



UNPACKING GAME AND POULTRY, LEAENHALL MARKET.

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG.

THERE is no department of our literature in which there has been of late years so much improvement as that of books for the young. In naturalness, in freedom of movement, in moral tone—every way we have a change for the better. It is true that some crude mannerisms hang about the new style of writing, but they will drop off in time, and leave the substantial good behind, alone in its glory. The mannerisms we refer to are those which depend upon the sentiment pervading the writing being taken up at secondhand, letting you at once into the secret of the author's model teacher. The power of love as a moral agent, the presence of God in nature, the presence of God in history and life, the usefulness of muscular exercise—these are elements which we can easily trace to their origin. We can tell at once whether the writer of a child's book doats on Wordsworth or Kingsley, Longfellow or Elihu Burritt. But, no matter; anything is better than the old selfish style, in which the great object was neither to please nor to better the child, but to inoculate it with some pet virtue, not too real, of its present-making senior. Hence an old foggy who particularly hated being "done" (because he was conceited), and fancied, therefore, that he loved truth, would give his little nephew a tale called "Prevarication, or the Fruits of Falsehood;" a wooden-headed slow-boots would look out for a story-book about "Perseverance;" a Tory old dame would give a spirited, clever girl of a "rising" turn of mind a tale called "My Station, and its Duties," which not even a Mrs. Sherwood has disdained to write. And so on through the catalogue of good and bad qualities and doings. Nowadays we try to please the young folk instead of ourselves, and we shall not lose our reward in so doing. Children, like grown people, know when they ought to be gratified and "grateful," and seldom fail to be both on proper occasions. They ought not to be either, and will not be either, when we seek our own pleasure under pretence of seeking theirs.

We have a pretty batch of children's books on our table at this moment. Preferring ourselves the fantastic to the useful, we give the *pas* to Mr. C. Bennett's "Nine Lives of a Cat" (Griffith and Farran), in which the illustrations are better than the somewhat meagre verses which form the text. But the book is very pretty and ingenious, and may be strongly recommended by any one who knows what children like. It is very carefully got up.

In "Charlie and Ernest; or, Play and Work: a Story of Hazlehurst School," by M. Betham Edwards, author of "The White House by the Sea," &c. (Edmonston and Douglas), the writing is better than the pictures—much better. It is a capital story of a boy who, on playing truant for a day, put a map of the world into his pocket by way of guide in an afternoon's ramble, and proposed to feed on roots in the woods, like a real lost adventurer.

Among books of adventure we have two, bearing names on their titlepages which will go much farther than any recommendation of ours—Captain Mayne Reid, and Mr. William Dalton. Captain Reid's is called "The Boy Tar; or, a Voyage in the Dark" (W. Kent and Co.), and is an enthralling story of a boy who went to Peru boxed up in the hold of a ship among the merchandise. How he tapped the waterbutt, and caught the rats, and made his way out at last, is told with enormous gusto by this prince of wild storytellers. Elder readers will, however, appreciate better than boys the humour of the following benevolent apostrophe:—"You would have to be placed in a situation similar to that I was in to be able to realise the horror of despair. Oh, it is a fearful thing! *May you never experience it!*" An aspiration which will find an echo in every bosom, with the sotto voce addition, "and it isn't likely I ever shall; thank you for your kindness all the same, Captain Reid."—Mr. Dalton's book, "The White Elephant, or the Hunters of Ava and the King of the Golden Foot," with illustrations by Harrison Weir (Griffith and Farran), is sufficiently described by its title. The question whether a boy would like to hunt elephants or go to sea in the hold of a ship we cannot determine; it is a matter of taste; but the present volume is full of action and novelty, mingled with information.

Not less known in another walk of literature for the young than the names we last mentioned is that of Mr. John G. Edgar, whose "Wars of the Roses," "Boyhood of Great Men," and other works of the same class, will bespeak a hearty welcome for "The Crusades and the Crusaders, or Stories of the Struggle for the Holy Sepulchre," (W. Kent and Co.), illustrated by Mr. Julian Portch. We do not know whether young readers will forgive Mr. Edgar for knocking on the head the pretty story of Queen Eleanor sucking the poison from her husband's wound; but his book is an excellent one, and has the great merit of being free from any attempts at moralising; the history being left, like life, to teach its own lessons.

"Funny Fables for Little Folks," by Frances Freeling Broderip, with illustrations by her brother, Thomas Hood (Griffith and Farran), is very nice reading for children from four to eight years of age. "The History of a Hassock" is really good.

But the little ones get tired even of the most amusing reading in the long, cold, and wet days and evenings. Something to employ the wits and the hands more briskly is wanted, if you please! To the rescue, then, come Mr. E. Landells and Miss Alice Landells with "The Girl's Own Toy-maker and Book of Recreation" (Griffith and Farran), showing how to furnish a house with cardboard and paper chairs and tables, and ornament it with elegant and instructive puzzles; how to dress a doll; how to make cousin Harry a penwiper (which he won't use—did anybody ever use one?); how to make a Great Eastern lamp-shade; and how to prevent the place being littered with the chips made in all the necessary manipulation. The last point is the only one as to which we are sceptical of the possibilities of the case. A child might, by the help of this ingenious little book, cut out Ghiberti's gates in card, but we do not believe in its being done without a litter.

"Ernest Bracebridge, or Schoolboy Days," by W. H. G. Kingston, author of "Peter the Whaler," "Blue Jackets," "Old Jack," &c., &c. (Sampson, Low, and Co.), is the best illustrated story of its class we have yet seen. The book wants reality of tone, but the matter is substantially excellent, and full of variety. We hope it may be the last boy's book, in which a new "fellow" gets interrupted in his prayers, like little Arthur in "Tom Brown;" and, above all, the last, as it is the first within our knowledge, in which a boy calls himself "a poor worm." We may observe, too, for the benefit of future volunteers in the "Tom Brown" school of writing, that there is no particular charm in saying "fellow," and that it does not read well, unless it is quite natural.

Mr. Hain Friswell has written "Out and About; or, a Boy's Adventures told for adventurous boys" with illustrations by George Cruikshank: (Groombridge and Sons). We have tried these "Adventures" on an adventurous boy, and our success has been too great by half. We are not prepared at the moment to present him with an outfit to the Fiji Islands, and nothing less will content the party. The responsibility of the situation rests with Mr. Friswell, whose "Out and About" is a most stirring story of a boy's career, ranging from the North Pole to the South Pacific, and from boarding-school to courtship.

"Nursery Poetry," by Mrs. Motherly, with illustrations by Clara S. Lane (Bell and Daldy), is one of the prettiest books on our table. The poetry is very good, and the artist has done her part well. Let it be understood that we very cordially recommend this charming little quarto, and we feel at liberty to say a critical word or two, which will only be thought needless by those readers (if any) who think it does not matter how a lesson is made out for a child, or whether it is given with due limitations or not. Mrs. Motherly, then, will forgive us, we hope, if we question the wisdom of her "Spider" poem (p. 36), which has, by-the-by, so nice a picture to it, that it is likely to bedwell on. A little girl tells her mamma she can love almost everything, but not the ugly spider, which, she is sure, must know it is doing wrong when it eats the flies. The mother, instead of expounding spider-nature to the child, says, "You do wrong, my dear, yet I love you; and you must love whatever God has made." False teaching, we say, and any child will have a vague idea of some thing wrong in it. First, it ignores the special instinct which is given to a parent in such strength as to

be too much for the child's little sins,—an instinct which the child has not towards a spider. Secondly, it ignores the fact that love in spite of wrongdoing from one human being to another, contemplates the amendment of the wrongdoer, and spiders don't mend. Thirdly, it implies that natural antipathies are wrong, which cannot be proved; and that we are bound to "love" everything, in the sense of feeling attachment—which is utterly false. Malice is wrong in all cases; and love, in the sense of goodwill, is due to all human creatures, though, even in human intercourse, antipathies are unavoidable, and doubtless (supposing they are not allowed to prevent kind conduct) serve useful purposes. But it is fadish to tell a child to "love" every living creature—a tapeworm, for instance, such as is bottled up in chemists' windows. And, if anybody thinks such mistaken teaching a trifle, let him recall his own childhood, and calculate, as well as he can, how much moral energy he used to waste in futile efforts to bring his mind to views of duty, inculcated by his seniors, which he felt to be false, without being able to say why.

Always welcome is Mrs. Alfred Gatty, almost our very best writer of juvenile stories, whose "Aunt Judy's Tales" our readers will perhaps remember. By this lady is "The Human Face Divine," and other tales, also illustrated by Clara S. Lane, and published by Messrs. Bell and Daldy. This is not a book for very young people; it is for a growing girl. The first story is about "plain" women; and, though the "plain" heroine is intellectual, writes for the magazines, and even marries (an editor who has just got a legacy), we put it to present-makers whether they could offer the book to a "plain" girl without risk of offending. However, there are other stories which have no personal application, and contain some excellent teaching, moral and artistic. But has not Mrs. Gatty erred in speaking (page 133) of "that inner life which is alone worth the study and interest of immortal beings"? This is surely a slip of the pen. The present moment, with all its "outer" interests, is as much a part of our "immortal" life as any moment a million ages hence; and if Mrs. Gatty has, like her heroine, found "those German metaphysicians the most suggestive writers," she must know something of the "identity of subject and object"! But Mrs. Gatty brings to all her writings for young people an amount of culture, conscience, and poetic tenderness which has scarcely a parallel; and whatever she brings we take with eager thankfulness.

A good book, from the same publishers, is "The Life of Christopher Columbus, in Short Words" (school edition), by Sarah Crompton, a name honourably known to all who take an interest in educational questions. The old ever-new story is well told, and should find plenty of readers.

Messrs. Bell and Daldy have sent us three more books for children, of which we cannot speak so warmly. "The Giant's Arrows; a Book for the Children of Working People," by J. Erskine Clarke, M.A., is, we think, a mistake in every way. It is an application of Psalm cxxvii. 5, quoted in the Marriage Service, to the children of working people. This is condemnation enough. We object to such class applications of Scripture, more especially at Christmas time, and most especially of all when the little children are in question. Nor can any good come of setting a young creature to inquire, Am I a blessing to my parents? If not, why not? and how can I be one? The text of Mr. Clarke's little sermons is a text for parents, for parents only, and for parents in every rank of society. If it does not hold good in every rank of society let "society" look to it, and not plague the little ones about it, who will have their own battle to fight quite soon enough. This tract has made us so angry that we can scarcely look "with equal eye" upon "The Children's Picture-book of Scripture Parables," by the same author. It contains ten very good illustrations by Wehnert, which are worth the money; but we appeal to our friends if a clergyman shows common judgment in professing to tell the parables over again "in simple language," according to the titlepage of this volume. Are such phrases as "grand funeral," "splendid tomb," "jovial splendour," simpler than those of the New Testament? Hardly. And the author is so clumsy in the use of the personal and relative pronouns that his sentences lag and drag, and often confuse even an adult mind.

Of the last book forwarded to us by Messrs. Bell and Daldy we scarcely know what to say. It is "The Children's Pilgrim's Progress," with sixteen large illustrations by E. Wehnert. The illustrations we like, all but the one in which an attempt is made to represent Apollyon. What we positively dislike is the series of "Explanations" at the end: we do not believe in ripping-up allegories. But the "feature" of this book is that the young reader here finds all the skipping done for him—the doctrinal conversation-pieces being omitted, and only the story retained. This may pass, but we question the wisdom of it; let children do their own skipping, like grown people; do not weaken their future interest in a good thing in its integrity by this sort of spoiler of their appetites. However, opinions may differ about this, and the book is, speaking absolutely, a very nice one.

It is difficult, in a few hasty lines, to do justice to "Chronicles of an Old Oak," by Emily Taylor (Groombridge and Sons). A "talking oak"—which might be Mr. Tennyson's—tells how the world around it has wagged from the days of the Confessor to the days of Wesley. The machinery by which the old babler is drawn out creaks and strains a little at times; but the volume is a very good one, crowded with information, picturesquely given, and wise, tender criticism upon life, such as older boys and girls will understand and be the better for. We warmly recommend the book. It is well adapted for being read aloud to children.

"The Christmas-tree," illustrated (James Blackwood), is a pretty miscellany dedicated to Prince Arthur. The matter is varied and amusing, but not original, which is a great drawback, as it is intended for big boys and girls, who are often big readers with big memories, and keenly resent having "seen all that before."

But what is this very handsome candidate for the "gentle reader's, and still gentler purchaser's, notice?" "Popular Nursery Tales and Rhymes, with 170 Illustrations, by Harrison Weir, Absolon, Corbould, Zwecker, H. K. Browne, Wolf, &c., &c., engraved by the Brothers Dalziel (Routledge and Co.). This is a Christmas book for children. Did we ever? No, we never! Pictorial glories, all the best stories—"Two Shoes Good," "The Babes in the Wood," "Cock Robin" (poor fellow!), "Cinderella," "The Wooing Frog," "Mother H. and her Dog," "Dick Whittington," and "Gipin (John)," "Bo-Peep" and her cares, "The Three Bears," "Tom Thumb," "Simple Simon," and more to come than we care to rhyme on. This is the book for the generous uncle, godfather, or friend to give away. And oh! what illustrations! "This is the Owl, with his Spade and Showl" will haunt us to our dying hour. So will Bo-peep, "when up she took her little crook, determined for to find them." So will Mother Hubbard's dog reading the *Field*. But it was a mistake not to illustrate "The Queen of Hearts she made some tarts," which is made up of humorous incident, though it is short. We must not complain, however. If this book does not prove a success the old folks do not know what is good for the young folks.

MEMORIALS OF MILTON.—Mr. D. Hamilton has found in the State Paper Office some hitherto unnoticed facts in the life of Milton. Among these discoveries are several letters of State not previously printed in Milton's prose works, but of high interest, as illustrating the energetic intervention of the Commonwealth Government in behalf of the persecuted Protestants of the Alpine valleys. A treatise in justification of the war with Holland, already in type, but not known as Milton's composition. Mr. Hamilton has succeeded in identifying by means of the Order Books of the Council of State. These Order Books, it now appears, were arranged in the State Paper Office, their present abode, by the great poet himself. These are interesting facts of his public life. Of a more personal nature is a discovery in the Royalist Composition Papers, which clears the character of Milton from the old charge of harshness towards his mother-in-law, in withholding from the unfortunate Ann Powell her thirds. Enemies of Milton have made much of these thirds. The State Papers prove incontrovertibly that the Commissioners for Sequestration, not Milton, were to blame. The poet's part in the matter was consistent and even noble. The whole of these Milton papers will be published by the Camden Society.

OPERA FOR THE DRAWING-ROOM.

A CHRISTMAS DIVERSION.

BY AUGUSTUS MAYHEW.

A FEW years since several merry and accomplished gentlemen delighted the fashionable world and the half-guinea public by getting up an amateur pantomime. The whole affair was distinguished by its great good taste and excellent judgment. It was a genteel performance, and met with well-deserved success. A very pretty and joyous spectacle.

Our original idea for this article was not opera, but pantomime—a short pantomime—to be acted as a Christmas sport in the back drawing-room. We had framed an excellent plot, moral as a funeral oration. All its tendencies were educational. The principal fairy (Sunnysmile, Queen of Amber Groves—afterwards Columbine) was a Reverend Blair in spangled petticoats, uttering the most elegant and fascinating philosophy. The impossibility of vice succeeding in its evil courses, its certain overthrow and punishment, were ably exemplified by the wretched fate of Baron Thicknoole (afterwards Clown). But the more we laboured at this loving pantomimic task, the more we became convinced that such representations were unfitted for the drawing-room.

In the first place, back drawing-rooms are usually small. A three-quarter portrait covers the wall. Where, then, could the magnificent scenery be arranged? A pantomime without scenery is as useless as a fork without prongs. Then, consider the expense of machinery, dresses, and properties. Would a papa who has been grumbling because the girls want new bonnets and the boys new boots feel inclined to buy the necessary masks? Fancy a mother proposing a transformation scene to a husband who grumbles over an extra five shillings in the house-keeping-book! One of the comic scenes in "the business" of our pantomime would alone cost twenty pounds. Judge for yourselves. We extract it from our MS.

"SCENE 6.—A Journey by the 'Flash-o'-Lightning' Fast Coach.

"Harlequin booked 'inside,' Clown booked 'outside.' Beware of steel-traps and spring-guns—a skilful surgeon—wonderful cure—now for a game of leapfrog—England and Russia—a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether—death to the baker—a rise in bread—patent American-sausage machine." Ah! this scene would cost over twenty pounds.

But why should not operas—pleasant, elegant, little sing-song entertainments, with the pianoforte for orchestra—why should not these be attempted? Certainly. It may be said in their favour that nothing affords more pleasure to doting parents than to hear their children sing. The voices may be cracked, the words stupid, and the music bad, but the importance of a piano accompaniment covers these imperfections. The long cloak hides the bawdy leg. The worse the singer the louder must be the music. It is the onion flavours the stew.

Some may object that it is difficult to obtain actors sufficiently good to fill the parts. This is nonsense. Who ever heard of a singer who could act? All they are wanted to do is to open the mouth well, and "give it out" from the chest. A round, clear voice, and plenty of it, constitutes what the profession terms a fine organ. Never mind your acting, but bawl as if you were crying "Murder!" if you wish to make a hit in your back drawing-room opera.

As far as regards the capabilities of the singers themselves, we make this observation. The same Providence which tempers the wind to the shorn lamb has also taken pity on the bad larynx. Neither the incompetent vocalist nor the perfect musician has been entirely deserted; for by a choice mercy it has been ordained that he who knows no music shall believe that he has a good voice, whilst the other, who cannot sing a note, derives great consolation from his deep erudition in the science of harmony. How grateful are both for any opportunity to display their accomplishments. The one sings finely, and treats the score with contempt, the other keeps excellent time, but utters distressing sounds.

There is another point worthy of deep consideration, and which on first thought would seem to be an insurmountable difficulty. We refer to the music of the opera. The general idea with the public is that the merit of a successful opera should be entirely given to the author of the score. This is praising the cook, and forgetting the butcher. Now, we take a different view of the question, and feel great respect for the author of the libretto. "Songs without words" is a very original idea, and, for once in a way, very pleasant; but what would be the fate of "an opera without words?" Do you think that would be liked much? Try "songs without words" at, say, a friendly supper party. We term "songs without words" humming, and when any one indulges in humming he is asked not to make a noise. Let any man, when called upon for a song, reply that he knows the tune, but has forgotten the words, and see if he will be allowed to proceed. No! the call is for the next gentleman. Our opinion is that in all operatic productions the author and composer run in double harness. Next come the singers, and last of all the fiddlers.

It is a question whether everybody is not more or less a musical composer. Since the discovery and deserved popularity of the pleasant art of whistling, we have at times been staggered by the genius exhibited by the multitude in original compositions. Many of the street boys display to an astounding degree their latent genius as inventors of melody. We have heard a common doctor's boy, whilst carrying his basketful of black doses, break forth like a thrush into whistling song, and thrill the street with a perfectly original romance. Had it been noted down it would have had a fine sale. This lad may have neglected his *adagio*, and been perhaps, too, *con fuoco* or *risoluto*, but still the elements of great beauty were evident. Again, a groom, who for years has worked for a cabmaster in a news behind our house, never rubs down his horses without performing a remarkable *scherzo* of curious brilliancy and sweetness. These facts will help to prove that the invention of melody is not so difficult as, on first thought, would appear. Opera in the back drawing-room will not flag for want of music providing the literary portion of the entertainment be furnished. Invent your airs on your own whistle. Besides, considering that for a few shillings you may buy a hundred choice airs from the finest operas, surely no person of intelligence need be at a standstill for a song or two. This is a method much in vogue, and it has this advantage—that by borrowing from approved composers your work cannot lack merit.

Therefore, if our arguments be correct, we, in presenting our readers with the libretto of an original opera for the back drawing-room, have done all that is necessary to render its performance an easy task. We are glad of this, because it would be impossible to find room in our columns for the score, which, we are told, would fill a wheelbarrow.

The title of our opera is "The German Troubadour," but our hero must not be supposed to belong to the band of wandering poets who flourished (more or less) in the thirteenth century, but to be simply a foreign gentleman of our own time. The expense of costume is thus avoided. We make him a German for two reasons—one because we like to do homage to a musical nation, and the other because broken English is captivating and melodious.

THE GERMAN TROUBADOUR.

AN OPERA FOR THE DRAWING-ROOM, IN ONE ACT.

Dramatis Personæ.

HERR ALBERT BLEICKART, a tenor, in love with CLARISSA.
WILLIAM EAGLES, Esq., a gentleman of fortune.
CLARISSA, his daughter and heiress.
A BOOTMAKER
A TAILOR
A HATTER
A TOBACCO MERCHANT } Creditors of HERR BLEICKART.
A VINTNER
A GROOM
A LANDLADY
BETSY, tirewoman to CLARISSA.

SCENE I. represents the private furnished lodgings of HERR BLEICKART. The furniture is not costly, but well worn. Music-books lie scattered about. As the curtain rises the HERR is discovered sipping a cup of tea.

HERR B. Still no letter from my dear Glareza! (Sips.) My poor heart is drearily with chivalry. (Sips.) I wonder if my voice is

in goot orter dis barning. It is dwo week since I gif a lezzon to my hubil, and vat is to begome of my lantlaty if de boor romans is not baid somedimes a leetle gash? It is de derribe glimate of dis goundry a voreign goundry, without gash, gredit, or a frient in de world, I am zurely to be bitied—and zo is my boor lantlaty. (Sips.) Bezide, I am in lofe—yah!—in lofe with a jarning greature dat have unfortunadely gone to Bargate, and vant no bore lesson of busic. Ah! Glareeza, hiddle do you dink de bizery you gauze me. Let me zing a leetle zong and dry my foice.

(Takes down a guitar and advances.)

ROMANCE (con gusto).

Dra la la la (ter)
By de light of de zdar
She heard his guidar,
And gendly she zighed,
As zoffly she cried,
Dra la la la! La la!

(Spoken through music.) It is a blessing gompozition, and vill dake de buplic, zurely.

Dra la la lee (ter)
Fly tear von vith me;
Our zweet home shall be
By de shaty vood zide.
And I'll zing to my bride
Dra la la lee! La lee!

(Puts down guitar.) I zhall zell de boem and de zong to de bablisher to bay my boor lantlaty.

(A knocking heard at the door. The HERR is alarmed, and shows it.)

DUET (agitato).

HERR B. Vat dreadful noise is dat?
My heart beat bit-a-bat.

(Enter LANDLADY.)

LANDLADY (timidly). Sir! permit me to enter?
HERR B. (aside). Alaz! I can't brevent her.
No! I tare not brevent her.
Zad fate! I can't brevent her!

LANDLADY (presenting her bill). Pray, can you settle my little account?

HERR B. (nervously). Yesh, yesh! bost zurely!

LANDLADY (pleased). If you could pay me the small amount.

HERR B. Yesh! yesh! bost zurely! (Retires up stage.)

SOLO (affettuoso).

LANDLADY. Though gentle his words and tender his tone,
Soft as the lute and sweeter than honey,
Yet ne'er since the day he made this his home
Have I gazed on the hue of his money!

HERR B. (coming forward). Gif me dime and I vill bay your moneys. I am a chentleman of birth, and vill zee you get your moneys.

LANDLADY (sighing). Fair words butter no parsnips.

(Exit, mournfully.)

HERR B. Now dat she have gone, I am vonce more in brivate. None but de benniless gan dell de sorrow of boverdy. My lofe vor Glareeza is my only gonzolahun. (Violent knocking heard from without.) H'effens! vat driot is dat? (Rushes to window.) A growd is azembled in de zdreet. Vat gan dey vant with dis houze? Dat vace! I fear dey are my gredidors. (Sinks into a chair.)

Enter a BOOTMAKER, a TAILOR, a HATTER, a TOBACCO MERCHANT, a VINTNER, and a GROOM.

(For a moment they eye angrily the prostrate Herr Bleickart, and then, unrolling their bills, they advance.)

CHORUS (risoluto).

What shall be done to this bankrupt man,
Who basely betrays the tradesman's trust,
A wretch that won't pay, and never can?
From him we turn in deep disgust.

SOLO.

A HATTER (advancing).

Ah, bear him to prison and there let him lie,
His bed of damp straw upon the cold ground,
And send to his friends and bid them to try
The best offer they can of so much in the pound.

HERR B. (aside). Deir looks and vorts vreeze my blood!

SOLO (staccato).

Desbair
My hair
Ill tear
My zoul vith crief is zore
To fly
I'll try
Or die

And zeek zom disdand shore.

CHORUS (sadly). And leave us evermore!

BOOTMAKER (to Creditors). Friends and hardworking gentlemen! Let us proceed to our business. Remember we have large families, and times, as they go, are heavy. (Creditors fall into a line and advance towards the trembling, Herr Bleickart, who has once more sunk exhausted into a chair.)

BOOTMAKER (presenting bill).—This is your bill for countless boots.

TAILOR (same play). And this is mine for endless suits.

HATTER (ditto, but with agony). My hats, oh! give me back.

VINTNER (ditto). You'd only drink the best of wine.

TOBACCONIST (ditto). Come, pay for those Havannahs prime.

GROOM (ditto, but with determination). I've called about the hack.

(HERR B., jumping up wildly, seizes his guitar, and advances.)

SOLO AND CHORUS (con fuoco).

I'll fly to the land where first I saw light;
He'll seek for home on some distant coast;
I'll leave all my sorrows behind me in flight;
He'll leave all his sorrows behind him in flight;
And make courage and freedom my boast.

(HERR B. bursts into tears, and hides his face behind the guitar.)

TAILOR (moved). Harkee, Sir! Know ye no friend who would put his name to a bill? If it be a good name we will be content.

HERR B. I haf no frient. I am a chentlemans of birth vrom a voreign lant. (Weeps.)

VINTNER. Better be born low, sirrah! and rise by honesty, than come of high lineage, and never pay a poor vintner's bill.

HERR B. (aside). Glareeza! Glareeza! vat do I not zuver vor your zake! To vin your lofe did I ingurd dese pills. (Aloud, boldly.) Chentlemans! gif me time! I gif you my vort or honor—which is all I haf.

GROOM (to others). His words seem pretty straight. What say ye?

ALL. Let us call again!

CHORUS.

To trample on sorrow the brave mind would scorn;
Let us feel for the woes of a brother;
For, when with affliction the bosom is torn,
We are bound to assist one another—
Yes, we ought to assist one another.

(Exeunt Creditors, bowing. HERR B. gazes powerfully at the ceiling.)

THREE DAYS ARE SUPPOSED TO ELAPSE.

SCENE II. represents a private sitting-room overlooking the harbour of Margate. Through the open window the masts of the vessels at anchor are seen. At the rising of the curtain CLARISSA is discovered with her eyes pensively bent downwards, whilst WILLIAM EAGLES, Esq., reads his paper.

W. EAGLES, Esq. There is no news!—no news!

CLARISSA (aside). Would I could hear some news of him!

W. EAGLES, Esq. The papers are scarce worth reading—worth reading.

CLARISSA (after sighing—aside). My heart will break!

W. EAGLES, Esq. (rising). Cheer up, my only child, and dispel this settled gloom and canker at your heart. I had hoped this change of air and scene would have won back the roses to your cheeks. (Aside) I will try to rouse her. (Aloud) The company last night at Jolly's Bazaar was both select and numerous. Did you win at the raffle, my girl?

CLARISSA (with evident effort). No; I did lose.

W. EAGLES, Esq. (pointing through window). See! the gay crowd gathers on the pier. Shall we join them?

CLARISSA (entreatingly). I am weary. I would be alone.

W. EAGLES, Esq. Perchance a glass of wine will restore your strength. (Rings the bell.) I am an advocate for a moderate use of the stimulating liquid, and consider it a valuable medicine.

Enter BETSY with a decanter and glasses.

BETSY. What a cruel lot is mine! At the beck and call of all who are rich enough to take these apartments. How sad it makes me to be obliged to serve others with those very luxuries I greatly desire to enjoy myself!

SOLO (lento).

Wine, sugar, tea, fruits rare and sweet;
Game, jellies, tarts, each day hot meat—
It is my fate to serve and see them eat.

(Puts down the wine, and exit.)

W. EAGLES, Esq. (filling a glass). My child, I drink to your health and happiness.

SONG (con brio).

Wine! wine! loved drink divine!
Blood of the blooming grape!
Vine! vine! in foreign clime!
Dear native of the Cape! (Sips.)

Fill! fill! high up until

The nectar reach the rim.

Still! still! the ruby roll

Must bubble to the brim. (Sips.)

Pour! pour! drink I adore!

I'll take it till I float!

More! more! my tears implore

To drown my thirsty throat. (Finishes his glass.)

(Speaking). This wine, though far from expensive, is not unpleasant.

CLARISSA (aside). This revelry suits me not. I will retire. (Is about to go when the sounds of a guitar being tuned beneath the window, attract her notice.) Ah! do my ears deceive me!

RONDO.

HERR B. (outside). Who can resist de strength of lofe?
Nor raching lion nor drembling dofe,
Nor zoldier drained to baddles toils
Nor zudent used to mitnight oils,
All to Gupid bend de knee,
And galmly vait deir desdeny.

CLARISSA (aside). That tenor voice! That English so charmingly broken! It is he!

TRIO.

HERR B. (outside).

Oh! lisd undo de mindrells foice
Vith cheering zmile his labors greet.
Oh! bid his zinking zoul rejoice,
And kindly make his font heart beat,
Oh, yes! pray make his font heart beat.

CLARISSA (near window).

Surely I recognise that voice—
That lovely song so wondrous sweet,
That bids my sinking soul rejoice,
And kindly makes my fond heart beat!
Oh, yes! it makes my fond heart beat.

W. EAGLES, Esq. (angrily throwing down paper).

Confound that fellow's broken voice!

Disturbing all this quiet street.

Whene'er I hear these singing boys,

Their lazy backs I long to beat.

Oh, yes! their backs I long to beat!

(Speaking)—Clarissa! bid him depart! To give money to the idle is to insult the industrious. He has no penny of mine!

CLARISSA (looking forth). He seems by his bearing and clothes to be a reduced gentleman. To refuse assistance to one in distress is to be ungrateful for the plenty we enjoy.

W. EAGLES, Esq. Charity, my sweet one, should not be too easy, or it resembles extravagance.

CLARISSA. True, my father! but to be too cautious in our aid is to rob generosity of its noblest attribute. (Wraps money in paper and throws it from the window. Aside.) Heavens! it is my Albert! How can I inform him of my presence? Ah! my song! Cease, fluttering heart!

BALLAD.

CLARISSA (gaily). A sailor set sail on a boist'rous sea,
With his ninny oh! ninny oh!
A maiden was walking on moonlit lea
With her ninny oh! ninny oh!
Oh, tell if my true love is thinking of me
On a brisk December night.

(Sadly) The sailor was wrecked one mile from land
With his ninny oh! ninny oh!
The maiden sat weeping on the wet sand
With her ninny oh! ninny oh!
A knife was raised by a lily-white hand
On a brisk December night.

(Looks through window and gives vent to her pent-up feelings.)

W. EAGLES, Esq. That was your mother's favourite song. Child, you have moved your father.

(Conceals his emotion by means of the morning paper.)

CLARISSA (aside). Heavens! What do I see! Albert comes this way! I am lost!

Enter HERR BLEICKART, attired in a roomy cloak, and carrying his guitar.

HERR B. Glareeza! vor de vutur noding shall pard us.

(Clasps her in his arms.)

CLARISSA (firmly). Albert, I will never wed but with my father's consent and blessing.

W. EAGLES, Esq. (jumping up). A stranger in close conversation with my only child! This is, to say the least of it, unexpected.

TRIO.

Sir, I must beg you to quit this room.
How dare you tread this floor?
It will be your sorry doom
To be kicked through the door—
Yes, kicked till you are sore!

HERR B. (savage).

Gots! iv he drusts me vrom dis room
He velters in his gore.
It ne'er shall be my zorry doom
To be kicked drough a door—
Yesh! kicked till I am zore!

CLARISSA (entreatingly).

Oh! thrust him not from out this room
Your daughter does implore!
It has been your sweet child's doom
To love this Troubadour—
Yesh! love for evermore!

W. EAGLES, Esq. (with rage). Thus to bearded in my own furnished apartments!

CLARISSA. Father! father! You yourself once loved.

HERR B. Ser! I am a chentlemans of birth!

W. EAGLES, Esq. My child! you have broken a father's heart.

CLARISSA. My sainted mother looks down on me in pity.

HERR B. My vortune, though zmall, shall be honestly gained!

W. EAGLES, Esq. My only child; whose future I had ambitiously pictured among the great and wealthy.

CLARISSA. Love's magic can change the cot into the mansion.

Think of my mother!

HERR B. Dink of her moder!

W. EAGLES, Esq. (relenting). Child, you have touched me to the quick! Your mother was an angel! Take her, Sir—take her! and learn that a good wife, though penniless, is the greatest treasure man can possess. Clarissa, may you be happy!

HERR B. I do not seek for wealth. Ve vill all lif togeder, and ve shall share our wants vith you.

FINALE.

What joy! Great joy!

No alloy

To destroy

Our joy—great joy!

We'll know

No sorrow

To o'erthrow

Our joy—great joy!

(Curtain falls.)

"GOOD MORNING" AND "GOOD NIGHT."

THE "good morrow" of Christmas time should be, without a doubt, the heartiest, most genial of the year; but it is questionable whether we might not very well dispense with "Good night" altogether—at least from Christmas Eve till New-Year's Day. "The best of friends must part" is an axiomatic locution pretty generally received; but we can't see the slightest necessity for friends parting at Christmas time; and a jovial company of true friends who met together on the 24th of December, and, ere they reached the commencement of the new year, lost count somehow of the 29th, might certainly plead as good an excuse as the good people of Walton-on-the-Naze, who are said to vegetate in such a blissful state of Breetian beatitude that they once rang the church bells on a Monday, by mistake for Sunday. Our good and blessed holiday comes but "once a year;" it is a time when the little children are allowed to "sit up late," when the most staid and decorous ladies and gentlemen—advocates of "gruel at ten and bed at eleven" principles—would feel ashamed of themselves if they did not hear the "chimes at midnight;" when the performances at the theatres do not conclude till a very late hour, and merry-makings take place afterwards among the company on the stage; when convivial clubs hold their annual suppers, and the sternest and gravest of professional men (during business hours) are assured that they are the jolliest of good fellows; and when night-porters, hotel waiters, and the drivers of broughams and late hansoms never think of going to bed at all. If ever there be a season when society is warranted in holding its sessions *en permanence* it is surely Christmas.

Yet "Good night" as well as "Good morning" must be said. A world of actualities and stern facts demands it, and welcome and farewell must as inevitably be pronounced as sunset succeeds sunrise. See, our artist has shaken his Christmas friends by the hands, and bidden them farewell on the pictured page; but, like a humanitarian, Christmas-loving good fellow of an artist, as we are sure he is, we do not know the party, but in consideration of the season we feel in a good temper with the world—he has made his "Good night" a pleasant, affectionate ceremonial; in fact, one of those sweetly-sorrowful partings in which the individuals concerned might say "Good night" until to-morrow.

First, we have a Christmas welcome at the church porch. It is a good thing to go to church on Christmas morning; not to cough at the Litany, or hoot the choristers, or otherwise to indulge our theological spites, but to sing "Oh be joyful!" with humble and happy hearts, and to remember not so much the Thirty-nine Articles as the thirty-nine thousand mercies which have been vouchsafed us during the past year, and especially that crowning one of being permitted to see another Christmas, and welcome its kindly advent beneath the sacred roof-tree. To go to church on Christmas morning is the very best grace before meat in the world; and the handshakings and cordial greetings that are taking place between the clergyman, and the squire, and the parishoners this frosty morning are sure forerunners of the post-meridian festivities. There is a cosy and old English look about this same church porch; and the present writer, who objects to ornamental Pussysm on the same principle that he objects to a marble bust being coloured in imitation of a Chinese joss, hopes that within this porch "church decoration" has been carried out for once to its fullest extent, not by means of candlesticks, artificial flowers, and needlework, but in the way of earlarks of the hearty English holly and mistletoe decking the pews, the lamps, the pulpit, and the window-sills. For a Christmas church without holly has a bare and barnlike appearance not good to witness.

Good night at Christmas time! Ay, here is it, and good night in the open air, and, unless we mistake not, with the mercury in the thermometer very low down in the world. Good night outside the door and good night in the bitter cold; there is but one excuse to palliate such an imprudent and uncomfortable proceeding, and that is Love—the "old, old story," on which poor Frank Stone was wont to expatiate so sweetly and so persistently. We can guess the whys and wherefores of this little episode at a glance. The swain in the fashionable cut Inverness wrapper, and, though his back is turned towards us, the self-evident hirsute attractive has been spending the day at the residence of his betrothed's parents, and, against all rules of genteel etiquette, but in perfect conformity with the sub-understood code of "engaged ones," is bidding his sweetheart good night in the only honest and legitimate manner practicable at Christmas, or, indeed, when a young lady is concerned, at any other period of the year. It may be objected that the gentleman has not the slightest sprig of mistletoe to excuse his conduct. Nonsense! say we to that objection. There are times when we must take our peaches without peeling them, and eat plum pudding with the simple aid of our fingers. Suppose you were in a desert country, where mistletoe did not grow, would you neglect to salute your adored one under that deprivation? You would be a muff, Sir, if you did. So, good night, happy lovers; may your innocent kisses be multiplied; and good morrow and good night to all. Would at each recurring Christmas we could bid good morrow to every smiling hope and good intention, and a long good night to the accumulated evils of the year! Surely we ought to balance our hearts as well as our books at Christmas, and carry forward nothing but peace and good-will to the credit side of the new year's ledger.

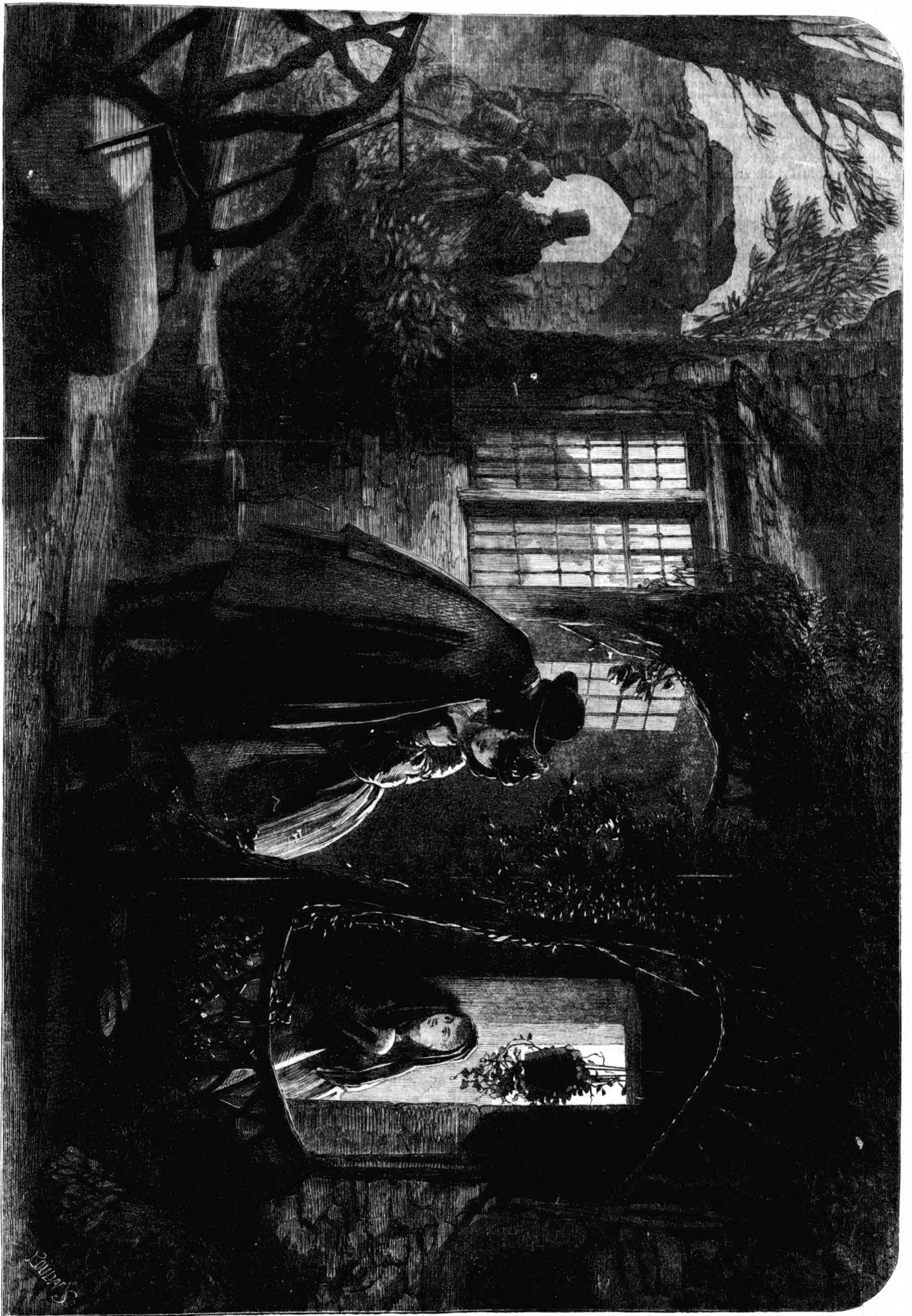
G. A. S.

REPEAL OF THE PAPER DUTY.—A meeting of the committee of the Newspaper and Periodical Press Association was held last week at Peele's Coffeehouse, when it was determined that steps should be taken for a large and influential deputation to wait upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer, prior to the meeting of Parliament, to press the consideration of this tax upon his attention.



CHRISTMAS DAY. - "GOOD MORNING."

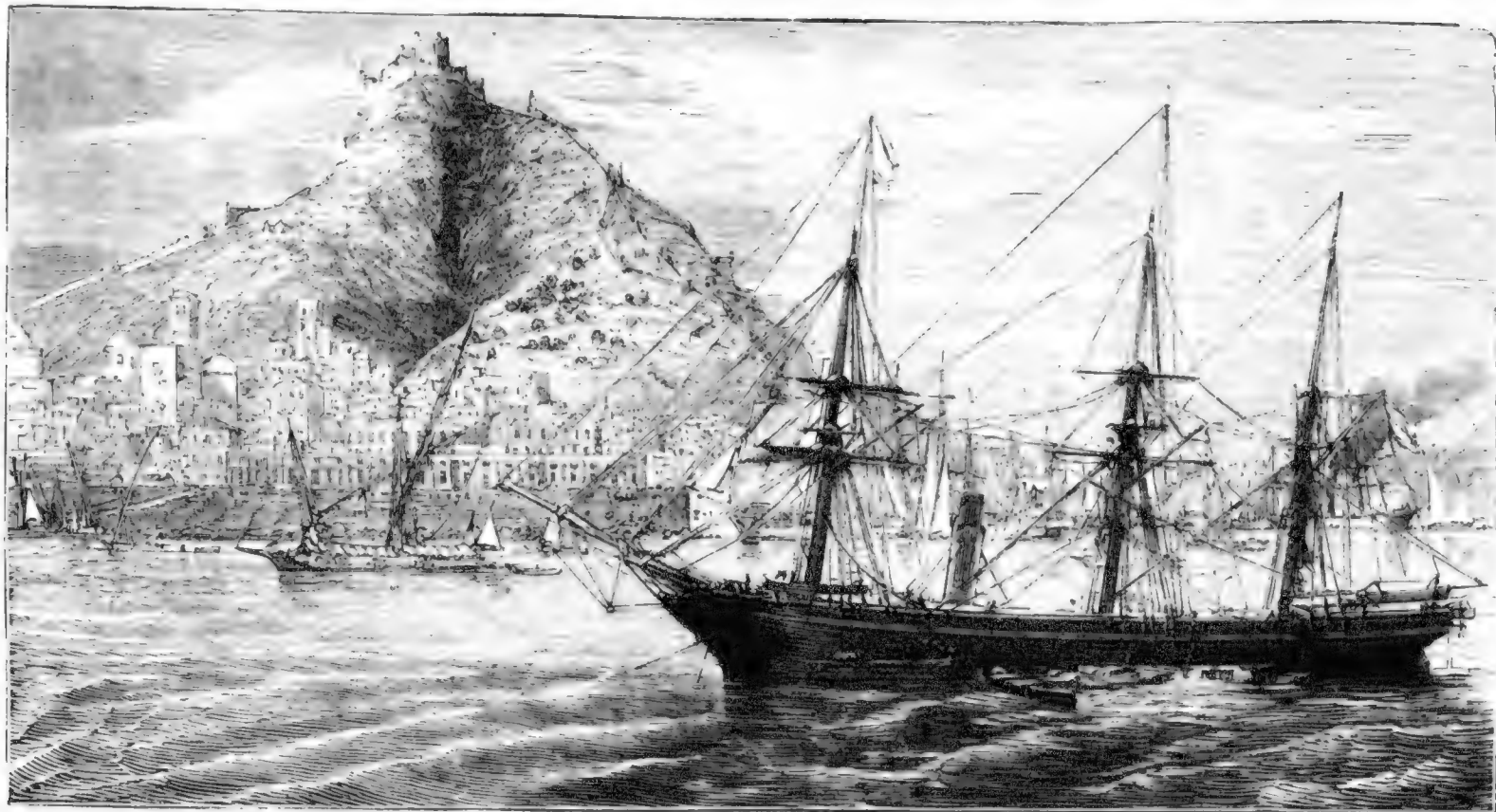
CHRISTMAS DAY.—“O JOY!”



Ballard's



THE FRENCH IN MOROCCO.—GENERAL ESTERHAZY'S EXPEDITIONARY COLUMN QUITTING THE MINES OF GHAZ-ROUBAN.—(FROM A SKETCH BY M. CAVERCHEL.)



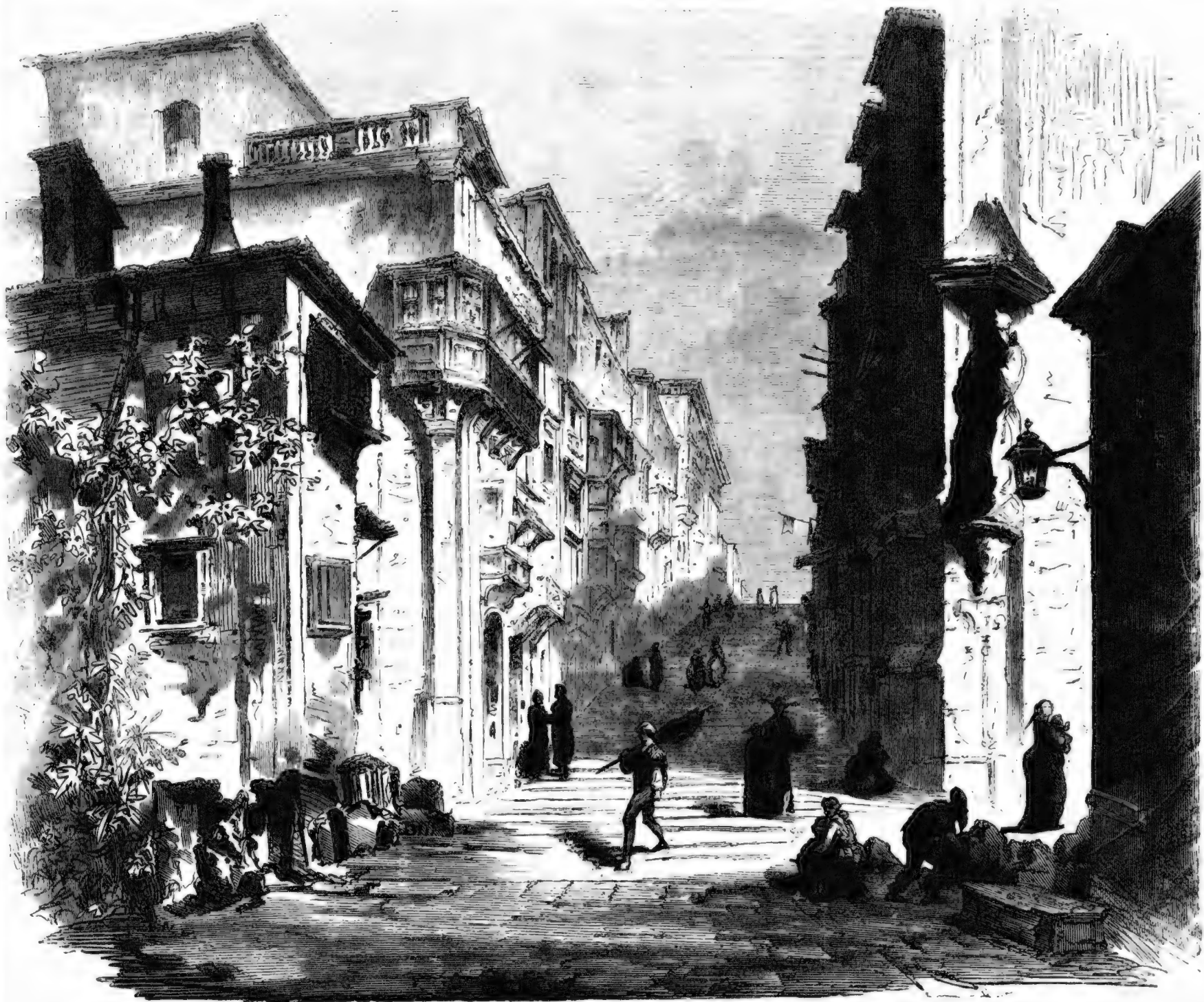
TOWN AND HARBOUR OF ALICANTE.—(FROM A SKETCH BY M. YRIARTE.)

THE TOWN AND HARBOUR OF ALICANTE.

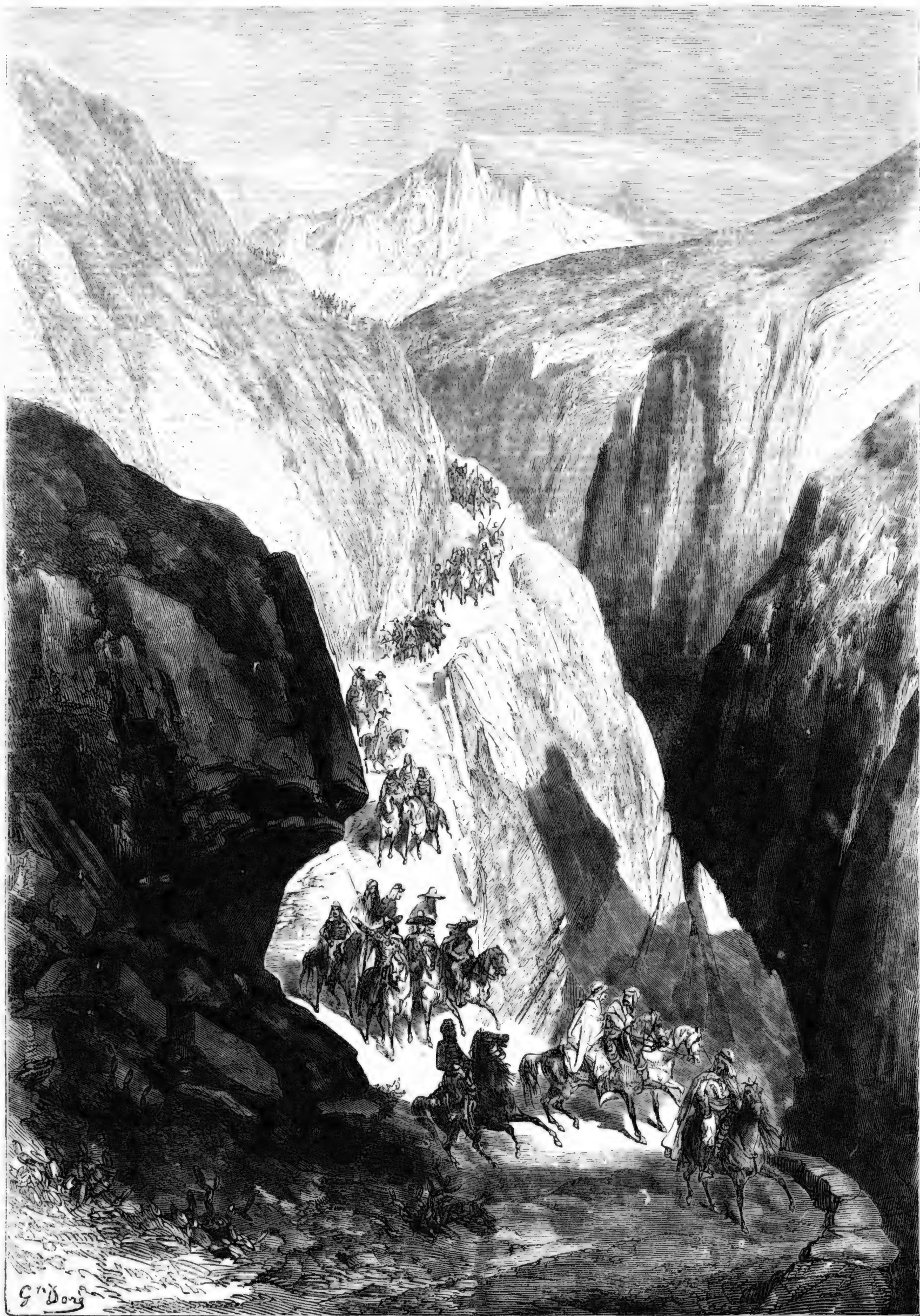
ALICANTE, from its importance as a commercial seaport, and its convenient position, has been chosen as the embarking place of most of the stores for the Spanish forces in Africa. The town, which possesses twenty-five thousand inhabitants, forms an amphitheatre at the extremity of a bay and at the foot of a lofty hill, on which is built a castle of great strength. The place was taken by the Moors in 715; and it was retaken by Ferdinand II. in the twelfth century.

The large steam-vessel seen in the illustration is the *Genoa*, shipping stores for O'Donnell's army. She was fated, however, never to reach

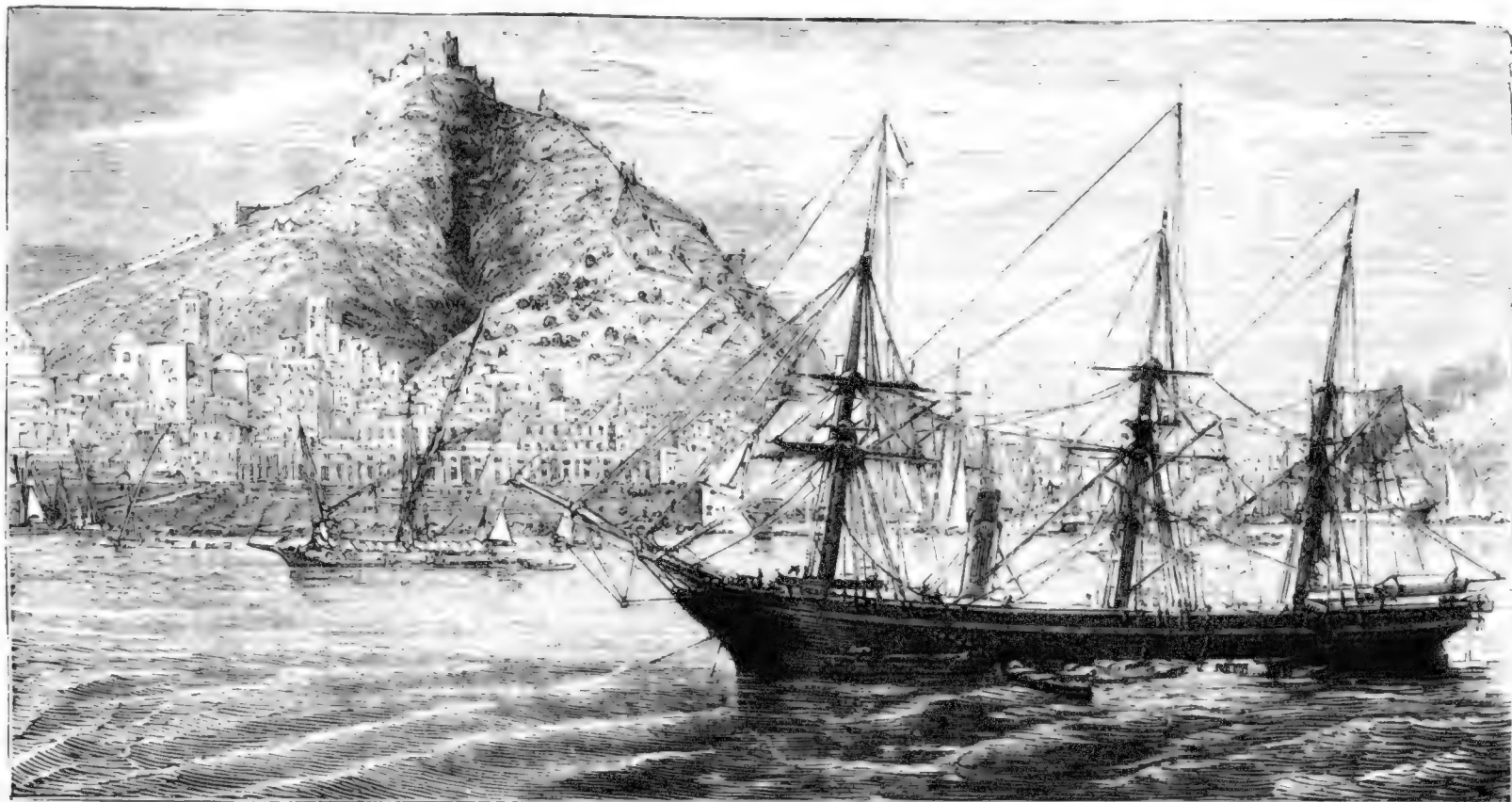
her destination, for, calling at Malaga, she there took fire, and, being freighted with gunpowder, and shells with their fuses prepared, nothing remained but to sink her before an explosion could take place. This was done by a battery brought down to the beach for that purpose.



STRADA DI SAN GIOVANNI, LA VALETTA, MALTA.



THE FRENCH IN MOROCCO.—GENERAL ESTERHAZY'S EXPEDITIONARY COLUMN QUITTING THE MINES OF GHAZ-ROUBAN.—(FROM A SKETCH BY M. CAWENCHER.)



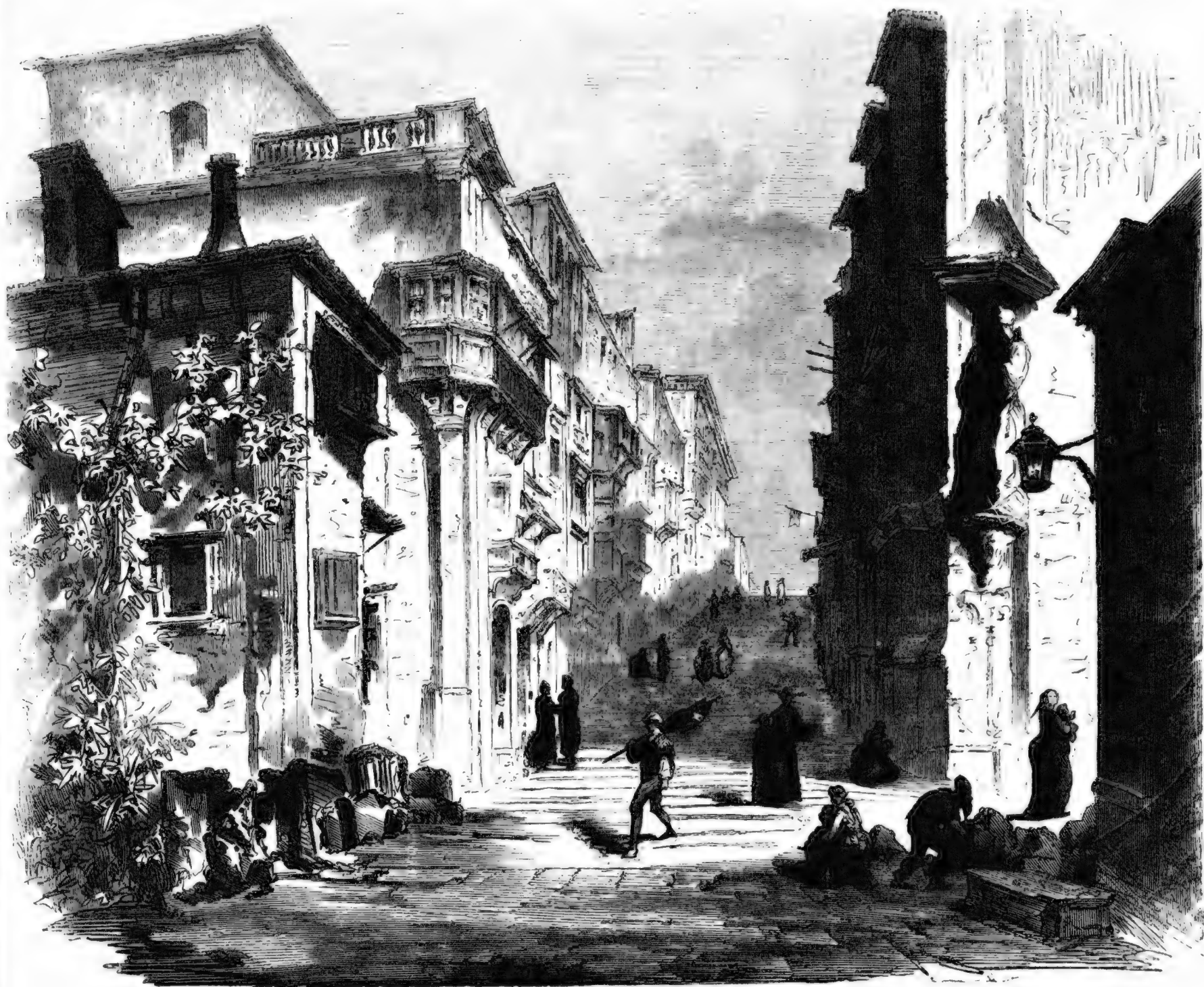
TOWN AND HARBOUR OF ALICANTE.—(FROM A SKETCH BY M. TRIARTE.)

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TO THE

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Proclaimed by angels centuries ago,
To Bethlehem's shepherds, echoes even now,
Wind-wafted from yon church upon the hill.

And wearied, yet all sleepless, as I lie,
Strange visions crowd upon my "wildered brain."
Departed forms before me rise again—
Comrades of wassail-days long since gone by!

Rings many a silenced voice upon mine ear,
Strong grasps from hands now stiff and cold I feel;
And, though I know the fantasy unreal,
Vainly I strive to check the rising tear.

"God rest him!" say I, though mine eye be dim,
(And, Heaven be thanked, my heart is lightly moved!)
"God rest the souls of those I dearly loved,
And glory in the highest be to Him!"

Who at this holy season fills the mind
With calm content and gentle thoughts of love
To those now singing in His choir above,
And waiting for the dear ones left behind.

Then for each other lingering here below
Do better, nobler sympathies arise.
Forgiveness comes beneath a Christmas guise,
And ancient memories smooth the angry brow!

All breathe a blessing on their English home—
The war-worn soldier in the Indian camp—
The settler standing on the fresh-cleared swamp—
The sailor tossing on the Arctic foam.

And on the ear of each, by fancy borne,
The music of the merry bells is ringing
Blithe notes of jubilee to heaven winging.
Through the clear air upon this Christmas morn.

A PURSE OR A COFFIN.

THE TRUE STORY OF LADY DURBAR.

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

I TELL the following story almost exactly "as it was told to me." I have amplified little and exaggerated nothing. The names, for obvious reasons, have been changed. The facts—they are facts—on which the tale is founded strike me as very much resembling what the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge was wont to call "psychological curiosities." The whole is but an illustration of the astonishing contradictions daily and hourly to be met with in that more astonishing combination of good and evil—of nobility and meanness—of sincerity and hypocrisy—of generosity and avarice—the human character. With frightful force will be found here exemplified the truth of the Divine aphorism—"The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

I.

A GOOD WOMAN.

"Charity covereth a multitude of sins." In the case of Lady Durbar, however, charity's task must have been almost a sinecure, so few sins had her Ladyship, to all appearances, to cover. Very rare are the ladies or gentlemen of whom all speak well, at whom none point the finger of censure, or about whose ears the breath of scandal buzzes not; but you might have walked through every street, square, crescent, and terrace of the censorious and scandal-loving town of B—, and over ten miles of its environs withal, any three hundred and sixty odd days out of the year, and still heard nothing but praise, loud, enthusiastic, and heartfelt, of the Lady Durbar. The poor literally adored her. With the ample means with which she had been blessed by Providence she soothed many an aching heart, and made many a desolate home cheerful. Disdaining to confine herself to the conventionalisms of fine-lady charity in the country—to a parsimonious dole of blankets and an unlimited supply of cheap tracts—the beneficent lady was unceasing in her solicitude for the comforts of the less fortunate of her fellow-creatures. There is a vast amount of physical misery in B—, Belgravia as it is in its watering-place gentility; and many a den of squalor and filth, of want and hunger, of profligacy and intemperance did the lady visit in the course of her Samaritan wanderings, and light up with the glow of her tenderness and mercy. Hovels and shebeens, where the Protestant curate would have shuddered to set foot, where even the Catholic priest might have hesitated to tread, appalled not the Lady Durbar; no tale of misery ever encountered an inattentive or an unmoved auditor in her; no appeal was ever made in vain to her purse-strings or her influence.

She was, of course, often imposed upon. Divers horrible cutaneous afflictions were got up artistically with ornament and rose-pink for her especial deception; the consumptive (such is the hypocrisy of mankind!) would cough twice as loudly and twice as hoarsely when her well-known form was shadowed on the threshold; little children would look hungrier, equal grandams would gather their rags around them with an aspect of bleaker chilliness; artisans out of work would look more depressed, and always hard-worked women appear more jaded and careworn, when Lady Durbar entered their dwellings.

Innumerable were the remorseless landlords whose cruel hands she had arrested in the very act of depriving her protégés of their furniture. She had paid out innumerable brokers. Countless were the pawned articles of furniture or raiment she had redeemed, even though the articles in question—as not unfrequently happened—were her own gifts. Multifarious were the orphan boys she had apprenticed, the orphan brides she had portioned. Donations of blankets, Bibles, coals, bacon, mattresses, Welsh flannel, elderberry wine, and sarsaparilla, flowed from her in an inexhaustible stream. The Lady Durbar was a thoroughly charitable woman.

Few charitable institutions were there in the three kingdoms, or, indeed, out of them, to which she was not a liberal subscriber and benefactor. Widows, orphans, soldiers, sailors, miners, the blind, the lame, the halt, the paralytic, and the phthisical, all came within the sphere of her beneficence. Nor were foreigners and aliens—Turks, Jews, or Heretics—excluded from her bounty. Her name headed the subscription lists of scores of missionary societies, and many a cruel islander owed his ribbed flannel waistcoat, many a Katchakarvodlum Indian his warmingpan, hundred-bladed penknife, and edifying hymn-book to the charity of Lady Durbar.

Nor did she give alms as the Pharisee. She emphatically "did good by stealth, and blushed to find it fame." Yet did she know the value of the "bellwether" in every charitable troupeau, and therefore did she not object occasionally to the publication of her name in a subscription list, the liberality and frequency of her contributions acting as incentives to her less actively charitable acquaintance. But to a far greater extent did she prefer the pleasure of being an anonymous caster into the chest. Two humble initials—a simple anagram—a simpler motto often sufficed to veil the donor of a really princely gift to some hospital, school, or charity. Newspapers at Christmas time abounded with short but pithy paragraphs setting forth the receipt at such-and-such a police court of five and ten guinea subscriptions towards the funds of the poor-box sent by "D" and sometimes "Lady—." She subscribed for the burnt-out tradesman, the reduced clergyman, the shipwrecked master mariner's orphan daughters. The lists for the benefit of the widow of a "late officer of rank in H.M. service" abounded with contributions from "Anonymous," "A Sympathiser," or "A Friend." It was Lady Durbar who was anonymous, the sympathiser, and the friend.

It may readily be imagined that she was beloved to enthusiasm by all those who knew her. The very mention of her honoured name was sufficient to raise a storm of applause at a May meeting at Exeter Hall, or at a benevolent soirée at the Hanover-square Rooms. Anxious friends thronged her door and inundated her hall-porter with cards of condolence were she visited with ever so slight ailment; and it was even rumoured that so struck with her many virtues was Mr. Pix, the worthy Vicar of B—, that he proclaimed his intention, some Sunday or other, of preaching in full congregation a sermon on the merits of Lady Durbar. He never did so, however, being doubtless too much occupied in his feud and controversy with Mr. Patten, the incumbent of the opposition proprietary chapel, as to the exact prospects in a future state of still-born children.

I have been so eager to tell you how much good Lady Durbar effected that I have omitted to mention the source of the wealth of which she made so admirable a use. Nor, indeed, have I been at all communicative respecting her personal appearance, manners, conversation, &c. I must hasten to atone for these shortcomings.

The Lady Durbar was the only daughter of a rich East India banker and agent, who had amassed an immense fortune in those halcyon Indian days when the pagoda-tree was still to be shaken, and nabobs and their jagheris were not yet myths. Being a rich man—a very rich man—he could not, of course, do anything in a mean or insignificant way. Thus, when he failed in the great crash of 1825, it was for no paltry one or two score thousand pounds, but for a good million and a half sterling. There was a tremendous sensation in the City and on 'Change when it became known that the great agency firm of Mango, Chutnee, Chulopp, Choweringee, Chobahawder, and Co. were "gone." There was quite a crowd in Old Broad-street gazing at the closed doors and barred shutters of the bankrupt house. Our heroine's papa, Sir John Mango, at once proceeded to India to make efforts to "wind up" the affairs of the Calcutta house. Arrived there, no doubt can exist that he betook himself with much assiduity to the task of winding up. In fact, he wound himself away altogether; and, beyond a report that he had married a Begum, and had a very large zenana in the dominions of some native Prince, he was never seen or heard of more.

Fanny Mango, then eighteen years of age, beautiful, and accomplished, saw before her three very disagreeable alternatives—to go out as a governess, to take up her residence with two deaf and remarkably cantankerous aunts at Brixton, or to marry. Not that marriage is, to the majority of young ladies, such a very disagreeable alternative; but the only suitor whom the daughter of the fugitive bankrupt could at that time command was one Sir Hugh Durbar, a General in the Company's service—rich, bilious, ill-tempered, and fifty-seven years of age. There was certainly, *par dessus le marché*, a cousin of Fanny's, Fred Elton by name, who was young, sound-livered, good-tempered, and clever; but he was as poor as it was possible for a solicitor's clerk to be with eighty pounds a year and a bedridden mother to keep. Marriage with him was, of course, quite out of the question. Sir Hugh was in the direction, and a shareholder, besides, in no end of banks and indigo-houses. He had a house in Park-lane and a villa at Twickenham; and, to make a long story short, some twelve months after the flight of her father Fanny Mango became Lady Durbar.

Speedily she had bitter cause to regret the ill-assorted union. Her husband led her, for the twelve years that his ill-favoured career was prolonged, what is commonly termed the life of a dog. Constant ill-humour, chronic and querulous ill-health, brutal language, and not by any means rarely brutal violence, were the most salient characteristics of Sir Hugh Durbar. The lady bore it all like an angel. Her meekness and her patience under suffering were the theme of universal surprise and admiration. She swathed his gouty feet, she administered his colicium, she bore his blows and curses with inexhaustible resignation and sweetness of temper. Suddenly Sir Hugh took it into his head that he would travel on the Continent, and travel, too, alone. His wife, however, always tenderly solicitous, insisted on accompanying him as far as B—, in which charming bathing-place, and on the East Cliff, he had a mansion. There she remained awaiting his return—a return, however, that never came; for Sir Hugh Durbar died at Civita Vecchia of gout in the stomach just six months after his departure from B—, leaving his ill-used wife, it must be admitted considerably to his credit, the whole of his large fortune, without stipulation or reserve.

The news of her husband's death profoundly affected Lady Durbar. She was for a lengthened period perfectly inconsolable, and openly avowed her determination to wear mourning for the deceased as long as she lived. Thenceforth she gave up the pomps and vanities of the world. She saw no gay company, she went to no balls or parties, but devoted herself wholly and entirely to the practice of charity and good works.

Let me give you a sketch of her abode and of herself. She lived in a red-brick mansion, sober and substantial, but decidedly sombre. The drawing-room was large and old-fashioned, and covered with a Turkey carpet; heavy curtains shrouded the windows; the furniture was decorated with a kind of dull, subdued splendour. In the centre of the apartment was a mahogany table, heaped with religious books and tracts, with half-made-up flannels, packets of tea and sugar, work-boxes, writing materials, files and letter-clips, visiting cards, printed circulars, worsted work, &c. Imagine sitting at this table a lady of commanding stature, and who must once have possessed beauty as commanding. There is an indescribable dinge of meekness and melancholy, of resignation and long-suffering, lingering in her large, wistful grey eyes and in the lines of her mouth. She is attired in black velvet, and wears a widow's cap, though her husband Sir Hugh has been dead these twenty years. Her hair is rich and glossy, and not yet grey. This is the Lady Durbar.

She rises at six, winter and summer, and at eight reads prayers in the dining-room to the servants. From breakfast till lunch-time she writes or reads good books, or, like Dorcas, makes clothes for the poor. From lunch-time till three in the afternoon she gives audience to ambassadors on charitable missions. From three till five she rides in her grave and soberly decorated carriage from one abode of misery to another, carrying relief and solace with her wherever she goes. Then, home, to a plain substantial dinner; then, perchance a quiet, decorous cup of tea or game at chess with the clergyman, or the solicitor, or her physician. Then evening prayers again, and after half-past ten not a light will you see in any window of Lady Durbar's mansion. So passed the current of her life. So passed in the odour of piety and charity the twenty years following the demise of her husband.

But, *adieu!* what says the Trappist? "Brother, we must die!" The Lady Durbar fell sick.

II.

DEATH'S HAND.

There is about a house when Death is on the threshold or in the chamber an indefinable something, a feeling, a prescience, an oppression to be felt no where else, and never to be forgotten when once felt. The atmosphere seems denser and closer—almost stifling at times—there is an indistinct humming, a drowsy purring, and buzzing around you.

Death in the house! We speak softly and tread lightly on the stairs, holding our breath as we pass the chamber in which it lies in state. Talk of the death watch! What can equal in solemn and mysterious horror the sound of the undertaker's knock? Ugh! a sultry summer's evening, when the messengers of the grave come sidling up the stairs with list shoes, their grim burden—to be made more awful presently—between them. Did you ever hear an undertaker's knock about nine in the evening, reader? If you ever have you will never forget that monotonous verberation.

Death was on the threshold of the Lady Durbar's mansion. The road before the house was strewn with tan. The knocker was muffled, the bellpull untwisted. Tradesmen and servants glided stealthily up and down the area-steps; visitors held cautious conference with the hall-porter through the half-closed doorway.

It was Christmas Day—a bitter Christmas too. The snow had fallen heavily during the day, and powdering the dark tan before the door made it look like a twelfth-century of evil omen. As night closed in rain began to fall mingled with the snow, and a sharp east wind blew.

It was six o'clock in the evening. Two carriages were standing

before the door—Doctor Philby, the physician's, the Rev. Mr. P., the rector's. Let me, with the storyteller's privilege, enter the mansion and walk up stairs.

In the drawing-room five persons were assembled. Standing before the fire, his coat-tail spread to the genial blaze, was Mr. Squill, her ladyship's own apothecary (Dr. Philby had been specially called in, and was now up stairs with the sick lady). Near the apothecary, in an armchair, his hands demurely crossed, was Mr. Pix. At the table moodily sipping some wine, which had followed a hasty repast, were two young men—one, from his raven suit and white neckcloth, apparently a clergyman; the other bluff, hale, thickset, as a country squire should be. A third young man, in the undress uniform of a cavalry regiment—indeed he had but just ridden over from the barracks in the Lewes Road—was pacing hurriedly up and down the room, his jingling spurs and accoutrements jarring strangely on the general stillness. These three young men were the nephews of Lady Durbar.

The stern and solemn quietude of these five persons had in it something lugubrious and significant. Strong men as they were, they seemed not to dare to speak, or endeavour to pass the time in the ordinary unmeaning conventionalities of conversation. To every man's mind there was present the image of a certain front bedchamber on the second floor; in every man's mind there reigned supreme the thought that in that bedchamber the sands of life were fast ebbing away; that a form now writhing in and sentient of pain would soon be stiff; that eyes now lambent with the last flickering of the torch of life would soon be quenched; that for the being now faintly murmuring and gasping above stairs the washers and upholsterers of mortality would soon be needed—that, in a word, Death was in the house.

Suddenly the door opened and Dr. Philby appeared.

"A bad case, I am afraid, gentlemen," he said. "A bad case. There is, I am afraid, no hope for our patient."

"No hope!" exclaimed the young officer, the youngest of the three brothers.

"No hope!" echoed the country squire-looking nephew.

"No hope!" mused the young clergyman. He added, *sotto voce*, "And she has made no will!"

This was the key to the perturbed anxiety of the three nephews. Lady Durbar had fallen suddenly ill, and not the least, the slightest clue existed with regard to her testamentary intentions. The three nephews had all been treated by her with equal kindness and affection. A good living had been secured for the clergyman; a capital freehold farm for the countryman; the young officer's commission had been purchased, and his not inconsiderable debts had been paid for him at least three several times. But no distinctive favourite had been made, and the three nephews were, consequently, in the dark as to which of them would inherit the large property of which they knew (notwithstanding her boundless generosity) their aunt would die possessed. Mr. Pix, moreover, may have had some little misgivings as to whether the Cruel Islanders or the Katchakarvodlum Indians had been remembered by their former benefactress. The physician and apothecary thought it not improbable that some little mementos in the shape of mourning rings or silver teapots might be left them. Altogether, —nephew, parson, doctor, apothecary, though, of course, all devotedly attached to Lady Durbar, and desolated at the thought of her approaching dissolution—would have been all the easier in their minds had they known for certain whether Mr. Tapes, her ladyship's legal adviser, was the custodian of a certain document paying probate duty, and called a last will and testament.

"Her ladyship," suggested Mr. Pix, softly, following up the conversation I have by a digression so unceremoniously interrupted, "may have executed a will, and"—

"She may not," observed Mr. Squills.

"She might now, even," mildly suggested the young clergyman.

Dr. Philby shook his head.

"She might at least hold a pen, or have it held for her," the officer remarked, bluntly.

"As easily, my young friend," answered the physician, blandly, "as she could hold that sabre of yours in the steel scabbard, which, permit me to add, makes somewhat more noise, conjointly with your spurs, than is exactly suited to the vicinity of a sick chamber."

"I tell you what it is," broke in the countryman nephew, draining off a mighty bumper of port wine, and bringing his brawny fist heavily to bear on the table; "I tell you what it is, Aunt Fanny's far too sensible a woman not to have made a will. But why don't you, instead of bothering your heads as to whether she has or not, settle among yourselves who is to pluck up courage to step up stairs and ask her? I will, if nobody else volunteers."

The physician shook his head again. "Speechless, my dear Sir."

"But she can nod yes or no."

"Perfectly insensible to external influences."

"Hush! hush! pray hush, my young friends!" broke in Mr. Pix.

"Surely this discussion over the not yet inanimate form of your poor revered relation is, to say the least, indecent."

"Humph!" muttered the countryman.

"Ah!" sighed the parson.

The dragoon said nothing. He had taken off his sabre and laid it across a chair when reproved by Dr. Philby. He now sat down beside it and played with the sword-knot.

Suddenly there came a sound of hurried footsteps overhead. The physician and apothecary, mutely enjoining silence, quitted the apartment. Then, after the interval of a few minutes, more footsteps were heard descending the stairs, the door opened, and the Lady Durbar's maid hastily entered the drawing-room.

She was a rubicund, merry-looking little body, this lady's maid, at most times; far too merry-looking for the severe and staid Durbar household, but her face was now ashy white.

"Oh, if you please, Sir!" she exclaimed, addressing herself to Mr. Pix; "my lady is much worse. You must come up stairs if you want to see the last of her."

Silent and appalled the four men obeyed the summons, and followed the lady's-maid up stairs.

"See how a Christian can die," said Addison to the young Earl of Warwick. Reader, listen to the story of the end of Lady Durbar.

Nine o'clock had struck. The steeple and hail scourged the window-frames of the bedchamber; the night wind blew in wild and fitful gusts. The room was large and handsomely furnished, thickly carpeted, and was pervaded by the odour of some strong and subtle Indian perfume which Lady Durbar was strangely attached to, and which, in despite of the remonstrances of her medical attendants, she persisted in using. It seemed an odd whim, an eccentricity on her part; for no one could tell where she placed the perfume, or why she never used it in any other apartment of the house.

There was a large fourpost bedstead in the centre of the room, with heavy, funeral-like hangings. In this bed lay the moribund.

She was quite speechless, and to all appearance insensible.

The three nephews stood at the foot of the bed, the clergyman with them. On one side of the dying woman were the doctors; on the other the lady's-maid. No one spoke a word. Gloom, awe, terrible suspense, were supreme.

Everywhere save in the FIRE, which, bright and sparkling as sea-coal and a billet of wood could make it, crackled and leaped joyously, sending its bright tongues of flame and fiery smoke far up the ample chimney. A cheerful fire! A jovial fire! A roaring fire!

Just then the clock struck ten, and a wilder gust of wind shook the window-frames. Even above that and the moan of the troubled sea was audible. Just then, curiously, one of those red-hot cinders we call, from the ringing sound they make when cold, "PURSES," and some times, from their odd, long shape, "COFFINS," flew out from the cheerful fire and fell on the hearthrug, where it lay for a moment scorching the woollen fabric beneath.

For a moment only. The glowing cinder had scarcely fallen when the dying woman sprang from the bed. Speechless and apparently insensible, she yet walked erect and firm. Taking the tongs from the nook, she advanced to where the cinder lay smoking and crackling,

clutched it with the instrument, flung it back into the fire, then fell forward on the hearth—DEAD!

Dead!

And is that all the story?

Not all. The first emotions of terror and grief over, the body raised, the melancholy offices for the dead seen to, the gentlemen returned to the discussion of the question of the will.

There was none, to all appearance, extant. Mr. Tapes, when questioned, denied all knowledge of the existence of such a document. If the lady Dunbar had made a will, she must with her own hands have hid it somewhere.

The three nephews, the clergyman, the doctors, and the lawyer, were again assembled in the chamber of death. The body was in the coffin, and they had come to gaze upon it for the last time.

"There must be a will," muttered the dragon nephew.

"What's this?" exclaimed the countryman, looking at a little black, round hole in the hearthrug, immediately in a line with the head of the coffin, standing on its tressels.

It was where that other coffin—for it was a coffin, and no purse—had fallen from the fire.

"I'm not a believer in omens," said the physician, looking round; "but I really should not be surprised if we found a will beneath this spot."

"Take up the hearthrug!" cried the dragon.

"We'll have the carpet up!" exclaimed the countryman.

The hearthrug and the carpet were taken up: the "coffin" cinder had burnt through both.

"I do really believe," here interposed the lady's-maid, who had stolen on tiptoe into the room, "that my lady kept a strong box or something of the sort just there, for there's a bulging like in the drawing-room ceiling, and has been for years, just underneath that spot."

When the boards were laid bare, a considerable discoloration of the floor was visible—a brown discoloration, extending two or three feet from the common centre made by the black round hole made by the cinder.

"We'll have the flooring up!" cried the three nephews.

A carpenter was sent for and commenced his task.

"Phew!" he exclaimed, stopping short. "How strong that Indian scent my lady was so fond of smells!"

Then he went:—

A sudden cry of horror, of dreadful terror and amazement!

God knows by what half-distinguished scrap of clothing, what half-effaced lineament, what half-remembered trinket it was recognised and known! But there it was. From beneath where the cinder had fallen was dragged out the rotting body of Sir Hugh Dunbar!

Had he ever been to Civita Vecchia, or, returning, had he met his end here, murdered in his own bedchamber, buried before his own hearth? And by whom? Who knows? Who shall know till all things are discovered and the end comes?

THE POOR POET'S CHRISTMAS MUSING.

BY SHELDON CHADWICK.

'Twas the festival Christmas time,
The robin his prelude sung,
And petals of frost and rime
On the holly branches hung.
Homes rang with glad music's sound,
And the viands rich were stored,
And frolic and fun went round
The sumptuous Christmas board.

The young of their bridals dreamed,
When the jocund bells would ring,
And the old men's dim eyes gleamed
With thoughts of another spring.
The poor crept into their beds
To forget their hunger and cold,
Wrapping their sorrowful heads
In oblivion's balmy fold.

At his fat feast Dives sate,
While Lazarus died in the street,
And Herod and Gallio ate
Of all that was rich and sweet.
Joy shook palace roof and floor,
Each window shone like a gem,
Beauty her coronet wore,
And Wealth his proud diadem.

Oh! then, as I mused alone,
And glee-songs rippled the air,
I thought of the pleasures flown
With the happy years that were;
For the loved and the lost I sighed,
My fancies were flying free;
And I dreamed of a world untied,
In the years that were to be.

Around me a cloud did float,
Like the banner of death it lower'd;
And a sharp, fierce agony smote
My heart like a demon's sword:
I thought of my first lost child,
When I kissed his pale, cold cheek;
And my grief grew great and wild,
'Till I thought my heart would break.

A bright little circle beamed
In my hand—a silken thing!
Like a dewdrop of dawn it gleamed
On memory's darksome wing.
'Twas a curl of witching grace
That hung o'er my baby's brow,
That beautiful rosebud face,
Methinks I can see it now!

Still left me were hopelings three
With budding mouths to be fed;
Like lambs huddled under a tree
While the storm sweeps overhead.
Three bonny blossoms of love,
Three treasure-barks on the brine,
Three precious jewels above
In the crown of Christ to shine.

On the cameo fell a ray—
'Twas a friend's well known to fame,
And I wondered, though far away,
If he thought of me the same.
Sun-brightness illumined his hair,
While tears did mine eyes suffuse;
And a promise of glory rare
On his brow flung rainbow hues.

Ah! why did my fond friends flee,
Who once with lip-fealty kneeled?
The same blast which stripp'd the tree
The worms at its core revealed.
Their friendship was like a flower,
Which lives more on smiles than tears;
But Hope came unto my bower,
Like the robin when frost appears.

With aching and burning head
I gazed on my pale-faced wife,
For Fate with a mingled thread
Had woven our web of life.
The stars were dim in the night,
No joy in our bosoms shone:
Beloved was each sunny light
By our cheerless cold heartstone.

"Sweet Home" is a thrilling sound
That weaveth a mystic spell,
Which maketh the feelings bound
In an about heart that dwell.
What pen can the scene portray
Of a broken home so dear,
When all has been swept away
By the heartless auctioneer?

My books were "gone," whose thought-fires
A beacon of glory made;
And the fuchsia-tree on whose spires
Willie's pet canary played.
My mother's portrait was sold
In spite of my pleading prayer,
And my wife's harp, strung with gold,
And poor Henry's rocking-chair.

Ah, the hand of change passed o'er
The dial of home's best shrine,
Its images loved of yore,
Its altar no longer mine;
From all I held dear estranged,
I met with rebuke and frown,
But there was one heart unchanged
Though home's fairy-barque went down.

My darling-divinities clung
Like cherubs torn to my side,
While over the road I sung
With Providence for my guide;
I oft had a vision wild
Of a Shape that walks by night,
Which blighted my floweret child
On the wintry desert white.

No home! on the wide, wide earth,
Beneath the shelterless sky!
No home! by a stranger's hearth
Where the weary hours crawl by!
Guided was Israel's host
By God to the Promised Land,
But never a finger-post
"Home" pointed our little band.

Better the roof and the bed
Of the grave than strange lips curled,
I would rather my babes were dead
Than wanderers o'er the world.
He who wept by Lazarus' grave,
And the sparrow's fall who heeds,
My little shorn lambs can save,
And bind up the heart that bleeds.

Then I improvised the song
I would carol in after years,
And day-dreams in dazzling throngs
Into glory touched my tears;
I said, "We shall hear joy-bells
Ring merrily over our woes,
Like the primrose scents the dells,
And the glossy crocus blows."

We kissed each stammering child,
And strove to be glad and gay,
Till midnight with moonbeams smiled,
And we all knelt down to pray.
Above us the moon's pearl-ark
Beams from heaven's Ararat threw,
And a tender star out of the dark
The window-pane glimmered through.

A CHRISTMAS ELOPEMENT

BY EDMUND YATES.

It was not until I had had some slight refreshment at Bletchley, the first station at which the express stopped, and was again reseated in the carriage warmly wrapped in my plaid; and defying directors and by-laws with a cigar in my mouth, that I could understand why I was there at all. He had come to me when I was sitting at dinner at the club (I had a club in those days), and had said to me, "Will you save me?" "Save" was the word; at first I thought he said "shave;" and as he had a large and flowing beard, of which I knew him to be proud, I at first thought him mad. Nor did my suspicions of his lunacy diminish when I clearly understood him. Save him—(by-the-way, it is as well that I should tell you that him was Charley Annesley, otherwise the Hon. Charles Annesley, Captain and Lieutenant-Colonel in the Irish Bombardier Guards, and my very old friend). Save him!—what did he mean? Was it money? Was I—worth my twopence-halfpenny a year as a draft or docket-office clerk—to back a bill for the discounting of Mr. Lewis Abrahams, to tell Von Rouchen, the tobaccoist, that I'd be responsible for Charley's account, or to redeem that bracelet which Clara might want to wear to-night from the temporary custody of I Lombardi? Save him?—had he been absent without leave, or painting of a lively pea-green colour the horse and chaise of some of these citizens unblest with a sense of humour, or breaking in the floor and up the furniture of some younger Irish Bombardier, and did he require that tremendous influence of the press which my position as theatrical critic of the *Record* and London correspondent of the *Star*—as the *World* *Looker-on* gives me, to be exercised in his behalf? No; he wanted no assistance of this kind, he said; what he did require was that I should run away with a young lady for him! Only that, nothing more!

"In five words, old fellow," said Charley, "this is the state of the case. You may have heard me mention the name of Laura Needham." Not an impossibility; as Charley never was in any one's company without telling him all his woes. "Well, you know she and I have understood each other—spooned, and all that sort of thing, this long time past. Governor won't hear of it; awful fellow, he is: coal-merchant, or something of that kind, down in Berkshire—not merchant; miner—coal-mines—iron—smeltings—factories—smoky chimneys—perpetual fires—and all that sort of thing, representing unmeasured money. He don't like me, papa don't; thinks me a fool, noisy, racketty, rowdyish, generally unpleasant and objectionable; and intends Laura to marry some nice young man in his own line. You know the style of party—square-built, sallow-complexioned, dresses all in black, and wears square-toed boots; awfully correct and distinctly snobbish; but Laura won't hear of it. I met her when she was in town with her aunt last season, and I was immensely 'fetched.' Such blue eyes! such golden hair! such a contour! such—ah! well, never mind. The smite was mutual, I'm glad to say; and since then I've made great running. We've tried all we could to please the governor, and put him on the square; but he won't have it. I went down to Slagington, where she lives, last month, to a bill for the benefit of the antiquated miners of the locality. I subscribed five pounds—five golden pounds, Sir—which I'd promised Truefitt on account, to their charity. I danced with her all the evening, and yet pa did nothing but frown. I've corresponded with her ever since, and our letters would tell no end in one of those

books that you fellows write—full of love and sentiment, they are. I very nearly persuaded her to bolt with me on the night of the ball, but she was afraid; and it was only this morning that I received a note telling me that she was so driven and worried by their constant appeals on behalf of this moneyed party that she had made up her mind to risk all, and elope with me to-morrow morning, if I would be at the park gates at five a.m., with the necessary trap.

"Good luck be with you, Charley," said I, "go in, or rather go down, by the night train and win, old fellow! All looks propitious!"

"That's just where you're wrong and where I'm bothered!" he replied; "I can't move hand or foot. I'm on guard at that never-to-be-sufficiently anathematized tower to-night; no one will exchange with me, and I can't possibly leave!"

"What do you propose to do, then?"

"To do! Have I been talking this ten minutes without your perceiving? Why, my good fellow, you're my best friend, you're a free agent, you've nothing to do; you must go and run away with her for me."

"I! But, my dear Charley, it's Christmas Eve! I've an engagement!"

"Yes, yes! I know all about that. Only, you'll go, won't you? She has friends in Slagington whom she can trust, and with whom she's arranged all. You'll go down there, see them, make arrangements, get a fly, drive over to her governor's place, meet her, catch the up mail-train, bring her to me, and, by this time to-morrow night, we shall be in Saltmarsh, and married!"

"But, Charley—"

"But me no buts, as your friend Mr. G. P. R. James would say; but go! Of course I'm good for the expenses of your journey and for a life's load of gratitude; but go! Salmon, the detective, who was an old regimental servant of mine, shall go with you to assist. He's down to every move, and will give invaluable aid. Only say you'll go!"

Acting on the first impulse, which has been the stumbling-block of my life, I said, "Yes!" sent home for a carpet bag full of things, and made up my mind to start. The dinner had been progressing while we were talking. I recollect the *carte* now—*filets de soles à la maître d'hôtel*, *filet de bœuf sauté aux champignons*, and an omelette aux fines-herbes. The savoury esculents had had their softening influence. I was young, and believed in friendship, and I said "Yes!" I gave up the pleasant party to which I was going. I ignored the proximate charms of the round game, forelets, snapdragon, joyous supper, gay dance, and steaming punch, which I knew awaited me, and by eight o'clock I was at Boston-square, had consulted with Salmon, the detective, had seen him into a second-class carriage, and was myself snugly ensconced in a coupé on my way to Darkshire.

On my way, but that is all; for I learnt that the mail-train went no further than Irontown, and between that manufacturing metropolis and Slagington lay some fifteen miles of dreary horrid country. The weather was bitter cold, the passengers sleepy and morose; and the further we proceeded the more I hated my errand, and the deeper were the anathemas which I mentally heaped on Charley Annesley's devoted head. A quarter past ten, ah! they were in full swing in Dorset-square by this time! Dancing probably, rattling *deux-temps*, whirling galops, pleasant polkas, chaatty quadrilles, and then *somebody* sitting out on the stairs, and, in revenge or spite at my not being there, flirting womanfully with somebody else. A nice exchange I'd made of it, in this shaking, jolting railway-carriage, with that prim curate opposite reading the *Guardian*; the nervous old lady next him, eating ham sandwiches out of a chequered wicker basket, and the over-eaten agriculturist snoring in the far corner! And what the deuce was I to do when I had accomplished the end of my mission? I had never tried running away with anybody on my own account yet, though I dare say I could have managed it; but how was I to do it for somebody else? The young lady with whom I was to elope had never seen me; might not believe my statement; might give me in charge; and, even if I overcame these minor difficulties, what an absurd position we should hold to each other on the journey back! and what were we to say or do?

My speculations were brought to a close by the stopping of the train at Irontown, and on getting out I found the faithful Salmon standing ready for me. On the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, assuredly Salmon had been well selected as a detective, for physiognomy had done its best to mark him as one of the very worst specimens of humanity. He was lean and hatched-faced; his eyes were deep-sunken under a heavy brow, and set close on either side his nose; his manner was servile, cowering, and fawning. But his promptitude was marvellous. On the journey down he had learned all about the route, and when I descended from the carriage I found he had already engaged a Hansom cab to take us over to Slagington. So we started on a journey that I shall never forget. Through the lightest streets of the town, even at that hour filled with smoke and falling soot, and with the roar and clanging of machinery even then pouring forth from the great manufactories which from time to time we passed—through the outskirts of wretched hovels where, in miserable rickety tenements, dwell the "hands" employed, slush, filth, and offal teeming up to their thresholds, and damp exhalations reeking in the broad, barren places on the fringe of which the houses were piled—through the trim suburbs where the gentry lived, and where the power of money had created a kind of spurious vegetation, for well-shaven lawns, sparkling in the hoar frost, lay before the neat little white-faced villas; and trees, stunted indeed, and now devoid of foliage, but still trees, were waving in the winter blast. Then, down a long, black road, worn into ruts with the passage of heavy waggons, ruts in which our miserable horse stumbled and floundered, and our frail cab swayed from side to side like a ship at sea, a road bordered on either side by high embankments shutting out everything from view save the sky, which above our heads was pitch black, but some distance ahead was of a dull red colour. My companion had chattered on ever since our start, seemingly annoyed at nothing, and turning into mirth our mishaps and joltings, and, when I pointed out the reflection in the heavens, he reminded me that we were approaching the black country in which are the great ironworks of Darkshire, and which cause that pleasant district to be generally assimilated to the infernal regions. Indeed, on arriving at the top of a hill which terminated the long black road, we found ourselves on what was apparently a wide, broad moor, where from a hundred apertures were vomited broad sheets of flame mixed with volumes of black smoke, and whence issued a noise as of a hundred thousand steam-hammers. Our horse had been flagging ever since the beginning of the hill, and now he fairly stopped; while, to add to the pleasantness of the situation, the driver declared that he had lost his way and could not proceed without making inquiry. Salmon, the prompt and active, was out of the cab in an instant, making his way over the crisp, frozen ground towards the nearest furnace; and while he was gone I struck a light and looked at my watch. Two o'clock—supper on in Dorset-square, and such a supper! Such Strasbourg pies, such *dindons aux truffes*, such lobster-salads, such champagne-cup and Maraschino punch! And here was I, frozen, sleepy, and famished, shivering on a bleak moor, and all through my own folly and ridiculous want of forethought. Thoroughly worn out, and ready to cry with vexation, I fell back in the cab and fell asleep, and I was still in a state of semi-unconsciousness when Salmon returned, helped me out and half dragged me along to the neighbouring furnace, where in a dry and scorching atmosphere, in the midst of a hundred strange unearthly noises never heard before, and surrounded by a group of swarthy beings dimly and fitfully seen through the glare and smoke, and looking to my disorderly fancy like the demon imps in the first scene of a pantomime, as they moved here and there in the flickering light, and with gigantic sledge-hammers struck demoniac blows on bars of glowing, hissing iron, I swallowed a tumbler of some bubbling hot spirit, handed to me by a half-naked, soot-begrimed giant, staggered back to the cab, regained my corner, and then and there sank into a sound sleep from which I did not awake until we stepped in the outskirts of Slagington.

My instructions were to proceed to a house in the market-place, where lived an old woman who had formerly been Laura Needham's



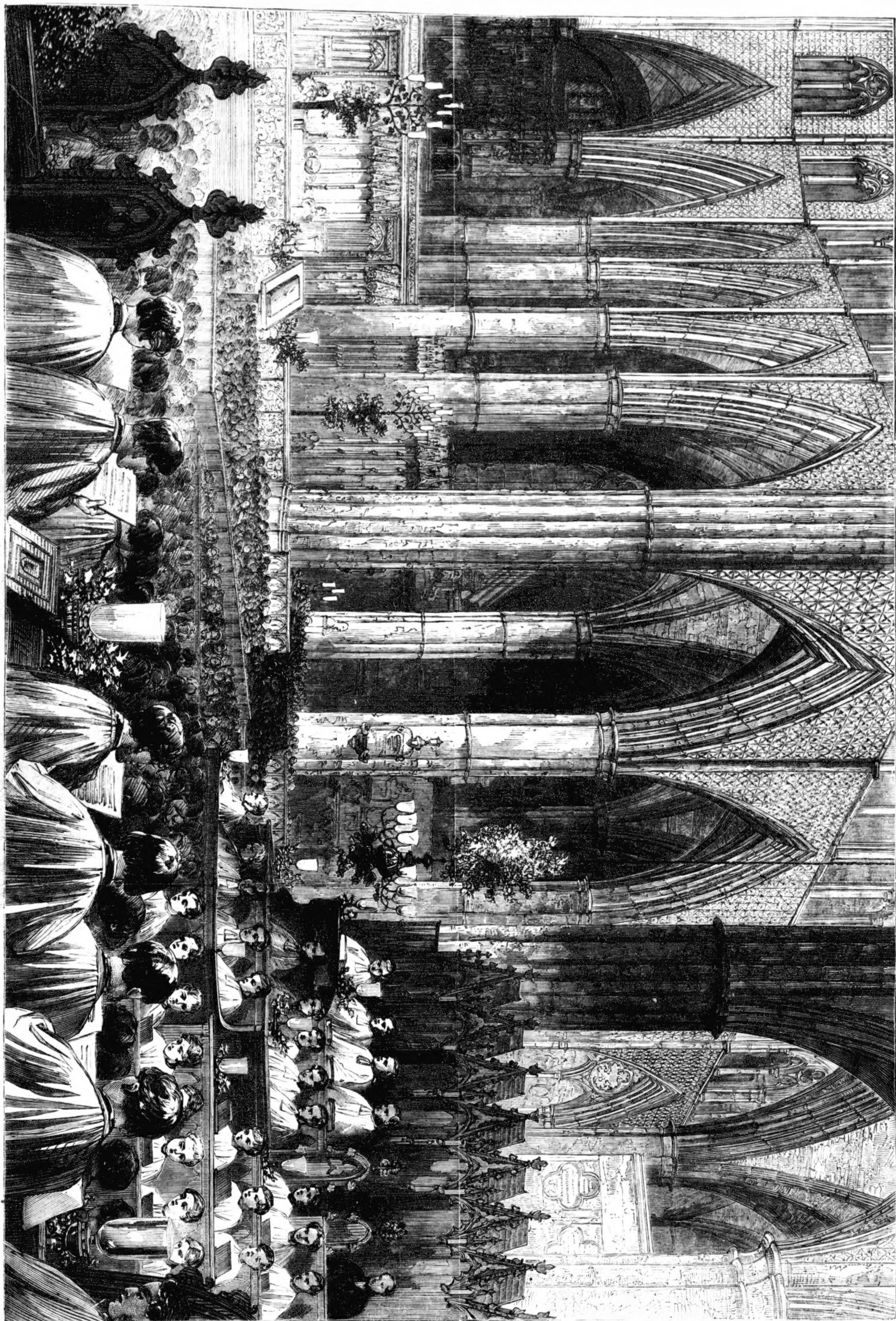
THE FIRST ICE OF THE SEASON.—"DOES IT BEAR!"

nurse, who was thoroughly devoted to her, and who, won over by Annesley's handsome face and golden liberality, had enlisted all her partisanship on his side, and was prepared to do all in her power to defeat the matrimonial strategies of the enemy. Nothing but the sound of our own footfalls broke the silence in the deserted streets as Salmon and I walked briskly through them, beating our hands together and stamping our feet to restore the deadened circulation. Drawn up in a by-street at the corner of the market-place we saw a fly, the driver of which had fallen asleep on his box, and was already powdered like a twelfthcake with the light snow which had just commenced to fall; and

at the sound of our advancing footsteps the door of the corner house was cautiously opened, an old woman looked out, and beckoned us to enter quietly. When we were comfortably seated before a blazing fire, and resolutely attacking a meal of hot coffee and toast, the old woman told us that all was prospering with our enterprise, that she had not seen her dear young lady since it had been arranged with the Honourable Colonel that he was to carry her off, but that about nine on the previous night there came a single rap at the door. When she opened it she saw nobody, but at her feet lay a slip of paper which she had since treasured with the greatest care.

From the depths of her pocket the old lady then produced a key, with which she unlocked an old escritoire, and thence took a japanned spicebox, from a compartment of which, labelled "Pepper," she drew out a slip of paper and handed it to me to read. It bore these words—
"All right! Remember, five to-morrow morning at the park gate. L." After reading it I handed it to Salmon, and was surprised to see a cloud come over his ill-looking face.

"What's the matter, Salmon?" I asked. "You're not flinching just at the critical moment, are you?"
"Flinching, Sir!" said he, disdainfully. "There's not a man in



CHRISTMAS MORNING AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Scotland-yard as couldn't tell you that finchin' warn't Harry Salmon's game. No! What I don't like the looks of is this here paper!"

"Why not?"

"Does the old lady know the young missis's handwriting?" asked Salmon.

"Lord bless her! not she! She could never read anything but print."

"Then my opinion of the matter is that the young lady's friends is fly to our movements, that they're up to their games, and that this letter's a trap!"

My own firm belief was that Salmon was beginning to repent of his share in our enterprise, and I determined to ignore all his doubts and suspicions, notwithstanding he perseveringly assured me that he'd "been in too many little matters with decoy-ducks not to know a quack when he heard it." But I was peremptory, and, as the time for action had arrived, we finished our meal, took leave of our old woman, and drove off in the fly.

The turret-clock in the stables of Needham Hall struck five as we drew up close by the park wall and cautiously descended. Salmon, who had all the way been expressing his opinion of the fruitlessness of our mission in mysterious terms, such as that our "gaff was blown," that we should be "staggered," and "spotted," got out first, and, after seeing that the coast was clear, beckoned me to follow him. I did so. I crept up to the wall, and commenced feeling along it until I found the door; then, with my heart throbbing audibly, I gave a slight knock.

There was no response; so I tried again. Then I heard "Who's there?" in a faint whisper.

"I am come from Colonel Annesley," I commenced; "and I—"

"Look out, Sir!" sung out Salmon, at the top of his voice.

It was too late. Whish! A deluge of icy water poured down upon me from the top of the wall; another followed, and then a third, ere Salmon could catch me round the waist and drag me half-suffocated from the place.

We had been duped, and Salmon was right after all. Laura's brother Tom had found out our plot, had locked his sister in her room, and, assisted by one of the grooms and several buckets of water, had prepared the pleasant reception which I encountered. Of course, all this I did not hear until long afterwards, when, cruel papa having withdrawn his ban, Laura and Annesley were happily married, and they had joined the others in laughing at my discomfiture.

I am not naturally a revengeful man, I believe; but I must confess that, during all the years that have elapsed since the occurrence of the events above related, I have been pursuing one person with a terrible, undying, Borgia-like vengeance, which is unsatisfied up to the present day. My victim is Tom Needham, whose greatest delight is still, in a large society, to narrate the story of his deluging me with water; and he invariably concludes by mentioning what a good fellow I must be, as I have since proved myself in many ways his kindest friend. Ha! ha! He knows me not, nor thinks of my designs! He has a mania for public amusements, and invariably applies to me for admission. Here is my revenge. Week by week do I consult the columns of the *Era* to discover the feeblest, the dreariest, the most soul-harrowing and brain-varying entertainments. Tickets for these I at once forward to Tom Needham, and when I see him haggard and wan after listening to Scavenger's burlesques or Horsecollar's farces, when I reflect on the misery he has undergone in seeing Wamba's Wallet, opened by Smiffel Jinks, or beholding the whimsical waggeries of the celebrated duologue-duellists, Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery Percival, I feel amply repaid for all that I suffered at his hands during my attempted Christmas Elopement.

JOURNAL OF A POOR HUSBAND WHILE HIS WIFE WAS AT THE SEASIDE.

Monday.—I have just seen my dear wife off by rail to Ramsgate. I am afraid the parrot will get jolted off the roof of the cab. It is a valuable bird, and sings "Pop Goes the Weasel" like a Christian. Poor Betsy has been very far from salubrious for some time. Nasty rings round the eyes and talked in her sleep, besides kicking spasmodically. Her physician, Dr. Giddiness, told me in private that the cheapest prescription he could give was change of air. Dear Betsy took £25 with her to begin with, so that the prescription, though it may possibly prove efficacious, won't be particularly cheap. I am left in town by myself. If my dear nephew Edward was here I should not feel so lonely. I have never been to Evans's. I have an idea the cook would inform against me. They say the Posé Plastiques are over by ten. Heigho! I feel lonely and dejected. The house never looked so miserable. I fancy I am reduced in circumstances, and obliged to look after a deserted mansion. Don't half like it.

At six o'clock rang the bell for dinner. "Cook was very sorry—no dinner had been ordered." Rushed out and dined at the nearest chop-house. Read yesterday's *Advertiser* and liked it, for I was in no humour for anything lively. When I am cast down I always read the police cases. It cheers me to see fellows sent to the treadmill. I didn't eat much, and what little I did wasn't good. The waiter coughed over my potatoes, and has a wart on his thumb. Walked about for two hours and whistled a good deal, not knowing what to do with myself. Noticed a policeman was following me. Asked him what he meant by it? Recommended to be careful—he "had got his 'hi' on me!" It has come, then, to this, that I, the possessor of two votes, three children, and £5000 in the funds, am taken to be a suspicious character, and strolled a "hi" on me! Laughed away my indignation, however, and strolled quietly home. Knocked and rang—rang and knocked—but no answer. Repeated this, with all my force, for ten—twenty—thirty minutes, until my wrist was sore. Would have climbed over the railings, but I am not so young as I used to be, though my flesh is still as tender and sensitive. Heard the bell ringing as if it had a fit, and my knocks seemed to explode in the passage. Got so hot, I wonder my hat didn't jump up and down, like the lid of a saucepan on the boil; pumped at the bell and stretched the wire, hammered at the door and hit my thumb. Here was a rich joke. I was locked out of my own house. Same policeman, who had informed me he was keeping his "hi" on me, came up and wanted to carry me off to the station-house. He was good enough to make the following remark: "We can't have this here noise at this here time of night." He was an impudent man, and, excepting the "E" on his coat-collar, totally unlettered. Scuffle about to ensue, but interrupted in time by the appearance of the cook with a large brown jug in her hand. "Oh! please, she had just stepped out to fetch the servants' supper beer." If I had answered the woman I should have forgotten myself. I kept my tongue quiet, but not so my eyes, which rolled like the German ocean. Besides, where were the servants whose beer she had been to fetch? Then out came the truth: everybody had gone to the theatre. My servants in the shilling gallery! My servants sucking oranges and drinking porter! The mice at the play because my cat's back was turned! The way in which I slammed to the parlour-door must have convinced cook that I was far from pleased. I regret now I had not sufficient courage to speak a few of the brilliantly-cutting remarks I thought of half an hour afterwards. Parlour cheerless, and all in the dark. The twelve chairs round the room looked very solemn, and frightened me. Desired the cook, to whom I could scarcely speak civilly, to light the lamp. The pampered female drew herself up and said she was not engaged as waiting-maid to light lamps—"It was Hann's place." Felt my blood bubble and my fingers writhe like snakes. If she had been a man (and she was almost) I could, as she then stood, have hurt her considerably. The sensitive creature said I had used words unbecoming a gentleman. I can take my oath I went no farther than reptile. All my terms had been until then purely zoological; but now I was beyond myself. Wound up by ordering her to leave the room. Suspect the confounded hussy was drunk.

Knock at the street-door. Another knock louder, and again another rampagious. Half thought I was locked out again; so upset was my brain. Had to answer the door, at last, myself. It was a man with a tremendous dish of oysters. I told him I had ordered none. "They was for the supper in the kitchen," said he. You might have knocked me

down as easily as I afterwards did a chimney ornament. As the hall was in perfect darkness the man put the dish in my hands, asking me savagely at the same time, "To lay hold tight, and look a bit sharper next time he knocked." Flung the dish after him in a violent rage, and overwhelmed him in a shower of the slippery bivalves. The crash of the crockery collected a crowd round the door, boys and blackguards scrambling on the door step up to my very boots for the fallen natives. Great excitement—neighbours right and left putting their heads out to see what was the matter. A fight, arising out of an undue division of the scattered fish, brought up my old friend with the "hi," the policeman. Great zeal displayed by that officer in dispersing the combatants. Rapid metamorphosis of manner in his style of addressing me. It was nothing but touching his oilskin hat, and bowing and scratching the pavement with his monster foot, and hoping I "wouldn't carry it any further; he was sure he didn't mean to offend me." Took the poor devil's obsequiousness in good part, and, to prove that there was no ill feeling smouldering in my breast, asked him, as it was rather a chilly night, if he "wouldn't like a glass of spirit to keep the cold out?" He did not surprise me when he said "Yes." He followed me into the house, piloting the way through the dark by means of his bull's-eye. Assisted me also to light the lamp, though the latter was a nasty, unpleasant job. We were nearly twenty minutes pottering over it. The wick had never been trimmed. Little did my own pet at Ramsgate dream of the suffering her George was enduring. The lamp—I gave two sovereigns for it—was one of the late patents that take nothing short of a lifetime to understand, and which you have no sooner learnt the mystery of than a better kind is invented. Disagreeable smell of oil about one's fingers, but soon became impervious to the colza-aginous bouquet in the ardour of one's hunt after the keys to get the policeman his promised glass of gin. Very odd! Couldn't find those keys anywhere. The hunt began suddenly up by the lamp going out, and making a stench I could never have believed possible if it hadn't nearly made me ill. Went down stairs into the kitchen accompanied by the policeman, his lantern throwing down before one a broad sheeting of light. It was like witnessing a performance of the magic lantern. It reminded me of driving about the house in a gig with the lamps lit. Found cook in an armchair with her feet in the coalscuttle, her head hanging down, frowning and snoring. Empty bottle on table. B 1072 applied his nose to the neck, and sniffed at it so vigorously that the bottle uttered a deep musical note.

Then he said, knowingly, "Rum, Sir!" Found a couple of clammy candles in a round tin box, not unlike a jam "rollypoly" pudding. Stuck them into two big tin candlesticks that I have never seen anywhere but on the stage, in the hands of chambermaids showing a way-laid traveller to his room. A great many blackbeetles in our kitchen. I trod on one, and it went off with a pop! Sauntered up stairs, policeman obliging me with his jack-o'-dandy. Found the street-door wide open. I must have forgotten to close it when I let the policeman in. Was never guilty of such forgetfulness before. My poor head was turned with my troubles. Renewed hunt for keys. Looked high (ridiculously high) and low (absurdly low) for same, and at last, half ashamed of my own helplessness, gave policeman half-a-crown to get rid of him. Felt relieved when he was gone, as it was unpleasant to have a pair of strange eyes made prying witnesses of one's discomfiture. Wished that dear Bessie was at home. Candles gave a very bad light, and guttered all over the carpet and table, our Brussels covered with drops of tallow as if it had been strewn with shirt-buttons. Got no snuffers, and the wick like a tenpenny nail. Wouldn't use my fingers and couldn't the tongs, so endured a smell that set me against sprats and eel for ever. Eleven o'clock!—the servants not come home. Twelve o'clock!—the hussies still absent. Half-past! I fancied I heard voices and laughter. Rang the bell. Jane dressed to death, and inclined to be saucy. Asked her if she knew what time it was, when she looked at the clock, and told me to a minute. Inquired why she had not brought up the plate-basket. "Missus had locked it all up, to put it out of danger." Betsy should have remembered I hate eating with a steel fork. Feelings anything but enviable—fearfully low and melancholy—couldn't make myself even a glass of grog; so about two o'clock I went to bed, quite spiritless. Couldn't find my night-gown anywhere. At last got in between the sheets with my dressing-gown on. Much scrubbed by my night-dress. Dreamt I was running all night after a will-o'-the-wisp, who jingled before me a bunch of keys.

Tuesday.—Woke up at eight o'clock. Rang for hot water. Not a servant up; never heard of such a thing. At last, after half an hour's violent ringing, Jane came to inquire most innocently, "If I wanted anything." Asked her if she was one of the duchesses of the land; and what she meant by it. Fire wasn't lighted; cook, the tipsy toad, was ill in bed; and there was nothing in the house for breakfast. Another hunt for the keys. Had a distinct remembrance of Bessie giving them to me in the cab. Very strange. They could not have walked out of the house. Could not, for the life of me, recollect where I had put them. At last, in sheer despair, sent for a locksmith and had the teacaddy, ten drawers, six cupboards, three cellarets, and a couple of wardrobes picked open. Couldn't touch my breakfast. The bloater was a red herring, and too salt for human food, besides being powdered with a very fine coal-ash, and the pieces of bacon, curled up as tight as a doll's curls, ate as crisp as cinders. The butter, too, was rank, the bread stale, and the milk seemed to be labouring under a fit of the blues as badly as myself. Not thinking it safe to leave the drawers open, and so giving the servants an opportunity of helping themselves to anything they liked, locked the doors of the rooms, and put the keys into my pocket. Went to put on my great-coat—that, too, was nowhere to be found. A capital coat, almost new, only just relined, and a fresh velvet collar. I intended that coat to last me two years longer. This came of leaving the street-door open. I saw it all at a glance. I had only myself to blame. Kept down one's rage, and found the umbrella had gone also. Going out, was met at the door by Jane with the inquiry of "What would I have for dinner?" Took half an hour to consider, not being accustomed to these things; at last told the girl to get two mutton chops and a few potatoes. Much time wasted. Too late for the train that always carries me to business, and missed a most important engagement. On returning, found the bricklayers in the house. Asking for an explanation, was informed that "Missus had thought it was better to take advantage of her absence from town to have the roof repaired."

Dined, and found the chops so infamously hard, dry, small, and tainted, that I was obliged to send them away, and surfeit myself on bread and cheese. I have eaten nothing since Bessie has been absent. My waistcoat begins to bag. On remonstrating with the cook, with the gentleness that an empty stomach generally inspires, she coolly said she would leave that instant. "She didn't mind being blown up by missus, but it was too much of a good thing to be blown up by master as well—one in a house was quite enough, and once for all she wouldn't stand it." This is a nice state of things to be left all by oneself without a cook!

Jane, however, has volunteered "to do for us as well as she can." Gave her a pound to get tea and sugar, and other things that were wanted. She only gave me four and threepence change. The girl seems very obliging, but has no idea of the marketable value of money. House very dirty from bricklayers. Why will they wipe their huge feet on the stair carpet? The noise they make is anything but cheering, the clanging of the trowels sets my teeth on edge. Boy called for the payment of the broken dish and five dozen of oysters. Never remember to have conversed with a more impertinent youth. Some of the expressions he used exasperated me so, I had to kick him into the street. Comforted myself with a glass of hot port wine negus. No lemons in the house; gave Jane five shillings to get some. She tells me they are charging fourpence each for good lemons;—they were not very fine ones either. Smoked a cigar in the dining-room, enjoining on Jane the strictest secrecy not to say a word to her mistress.

Went to bed very early, disgusted at not finding my room done. Jane very saucy: "How was she, pray, to make the bed when I had locked the door?" The reason seemed conclusive, and so I discreetly held my tongue. Ordered my breakfast over night, and gave Jane particular

directions to have it on the table not later than nine o'clock. Gave her ten shillings to get something nice. Should like to have had some supper, as I felt uncommonly hungry, but I hadn't pluck to order any for fear of giving too much trouble, and didn't like leaving the house at night in the possession of the servants.

Wednesday.—Awoke very early by the noise of the bricklayers overhead. It seemed to me as if they were playing skittles on the roof. Ring as I will I cannot get Jane out of bed in the morning. No breakfast until ten o'clock. Her excuse is that "She had so much to do yesterday that she is afraid she overslept herself. Would I follow her aunt, please, to come and help her?" I don't like "aunts," but I assented sooner than have any words about it. I hope to goodness she will not require the assistance of her uncle or her cousin as well. I couldn't stand that. Late again for business, and two bills presented before I got to the office.

When I went back at night found three fellows in linen jackets busy painting the staircase. Nearly fell flat on the doormat with horror and surprise. It was thoughtless of my dear Betsy not to arrange better, as half the staircase had been altered to a pale blue and the other was in its original dirty yellow. I gave way to their representations that "it was much better they should be allowed to go on now they had begun." But this nuisance is getting almost more than one can bear. I am already forgetting my multiplication table. My head is affected.

Thursday.—Found it physically impossible to stop in the house with the noise, dust, and smell of the paint! Awoke with a headache. The beastly turpentine had brought on a severe cold. Couldn't speak plain. The faculty of smelling almost entirely obliterated. As I am starting for business stopped at the door by Jane, who again points at me the deadly question of "What will I have for dinner?" Tired of being forced in this manner to eat my dinner twice in the day, I reply with considerable warmth, "I will dine out."

Affectionate letter from wife, saying how much she is enjoying herself at the seaside. She says she is so comfortable; her lodgings are so clean, and the servants so obliging. I wish I was comfortable. My lodgings and my servants are far from giving me satisfaction. Alas!

During my absence two papers were left with Jane "to be given to me personally the moment I returned." The first, a summons to the County Court for the oysters and broken dish. A most unfair demand is made for the crockery. A nice pleasant thing for a man tired with overwork to have put into his hand the moment he reaches his home! The second paper contains a notice of action for assault. I am in the hands of a Jew attorney. Upon my word things are going on prettily! The scoundrel who served this paper had the impudence to say that the boy was laid up in the hospital, though I could swear I saw him that very morning in the village jumping over posts. Dined most indifferently at the Temperance Hotel. Had lemonade and cold mutton.

Jane wanted some money to get a little something for dinner for herself and aunt. Gave her a sovereign, and very unwisely told her to get what she liked. I suppose she liked something rather expensive, for she returned me no loose silver.

Jones dropping in about eight o'clock, sent for some oysters for supper. Shellfish man sent back a most impertinent message, refusing to serve me. Could only offer Jones a few radishes. He seemed hurt.

Friday.—Pulled out of a most delicious sleep again by strange noises. Jumped up in bed, alarmed by the apparition of a pair of black legs kicking in my fireplace. Armed myself with the bootjack and bade the legs answer for their lives. On explanation, it turned out that "Missus had left orders that whilst she was away all the chimneys had better be swept." The two legs in question belonged to the chimney-sweep—a dwarf of thirty, who had mistaken the pot by which he ascended. Sent him up again in double-quick time. Scolded Jane well for having omitted to tell me over night. Told her that had I been nervous a fit might have been the consequence; but my harangue did not seem to have much effect on the woman, for I could detect a broad grin all over her face. Servants seldom sympathise with their master; they prefer hugging their mistress—at least mine do. Breakfast late again. Flesh and blood cannot stand this. Luckily Jane did not answer the bell very rapidly, or she would have had a bit of my mind. As it was, I remonstrated with the girl in the most appealing manner, but she cut me short by saying she found it impossible to please, and so she would leave the house that very minute. Terrified at the prospect of being left without servants, and having to light my own kitchen fire, carry up my own shaving water, prepare my own breakfast, make my own bed, boil my own potatoes, and fetch my own coals, I have to soften and pacify the jade. Eventually I succeeded in calming her, but not before I have given her ten shillings. She is to go with her aunt to the theatre in the evening, and I am to sit up for the precious pair. Jane came in again to say that the men about the house make so much dirt that she and her aunt find it quite impossible to keep it anything like clean, and would I mind their having a charwoman to help them through the rough work. See knows I am in her power, and takes a mean advantage of my trouble. She shall have a nice character, I promise her.

Compromised that little matter of the oysters for £5 to the boy, £1 for the damage done, and 10s. to the poor-box. The Jew attorney frightened me into terms. I know it would have ended in a Chancery suit if I had not settled. I hope the Jew will keep the money for costs; I am certain he will the 10s. for the poor-box.

Gave Jane five shillings for beer for the men doing up the house: "It was always usual to let them have some." That girl takes too much interest in those men. Wait till Betsy comes home, that's all!

Loving letter from Bessie, saying that she never was so happy in all her life. Thinks she shall prolong her stay to a month at least. Gracious!

Dined off pork pies and sausage rolls at the railway refreshment-room. Shall take a pill before going to bed.

Sat up reading till two o'clock for Jane and her aunt. Forget what I read, such was my indignation. At last in they walked. Borrowed six shillings to pay for their cab. My rage choked my utterance, or I should have read them a severe lesson. I am, I feel, in the power of the Jezabels. Fancied I caught sight of a policeman sneaking away. Could it be my old friend B 1072? He had better mind he does not rouse my British lion, or I'll call upon the inspector.

Went to bed—tired, discomfited, and profoundly unhappy. Couldn't sleep. At some hour of the night heard strange noises below. Threw on my dressing-gown, and stole on tiptoe down to the kitchen. There was Jane and her fat aunt in a state ten times worse than even cook. Two black bottles on the table, and, under it—yes! there I found the policeman, whose number I had rightly suspected! Ordered them to leave the house instantly. Jane answered she should not think of going until the morning. Had a great mind to give constable B 1072 in charge; but he must have taken himself up, for there isn't another peeler within a mile. To exasperate me, that fiend Jane demanded £7 15s. 9d. for wages due and disbursements for charwoman, eggs, flour, &c. Paid her sooner than allow her an excuse for delaying her departure. Crawled up stairs to bed in a heartbroken state, impossible to appreciate.

Saturday.—By seven o'clock I was the only human being under my roof. Sent off a telegraphic message (by baker's boy) to Betsy, imploring her to return, or else I should go mad.

Received by the first general delivery a letter from Betsy, saying she was so delighted with the seaside she did not know when I should see her again. She hoped the servants had conducted themselves properly, and attended to my wants. I was to tell cook this, and tell Jane that. Ha! ha! ha!

Sent, as a last alternative, a communication (per crossing-sweeper) to my mother-in-law, begging of her instantly to come and keep house for me. Dread her coming; but what am I to do? Couldn't go to business, as I was afraid to leave the place. Had no idea it was so difficult to light a fire. Sad dirty work: I am as black as a tinker. No butter in the house; and not a knife cleaned. Tried to prepare my morning's meal, but there was nothing to prepare it with. Ate some cold potatoes. Sent another special message by the electric telegraph (per greengrocer). Told Betsy if she didn't come to me directly I'd

shut up the house and go into lodgings. Got the stomach-ache from those potatoes.

A long, lingering day. Amused myself a little by looking out of all the windows—many of them, I regret to see, very dirty. Wrote with my finger "Slut" upon several panes, to show I had noticed their disgraceful condition. Bought ten bunches of water-cresses and two dozen of apples, to guard against starvation. Called philosophy to my aid, and walked over the house to cheer myself. The water comes through the roof of back attic. Felt so resigned, I got out on the roof in the afternoon received a peremptory letter from schoolmaster, saying my two boys were seized very badly with the measles, and begging me to remove them instantly, lest the other boys should catch the contagion. How can I go? It only wanted this to complete my load. Now my cup can hold no more misery without slopping.

No dinner! only my herbs, my apples, and some stale pieces of toast. Very odd, had no inclination to sleep after this dinner. I had reckoned upon my nap for shortening the time. Tried to read the first volume of the "Penny Encyclopedia" by the aid of the gas-lamp in the road. The wind was high, and I missed too many lines to get interested. Fancied I was sleeping, when it was only my eyes that were weakened. Went to bed. It was just as I left it in the morning, and I could not get the sheets smooth. Restless sleep, feverish dreams. Shaken at about three o'clock in the morning by a man with a mask pulling my watch from underneath my pillow. Had sufficient consciousness to discern that he had my great-coat on. How could he have got it? The truth flashed upon me at the same time as he turned the dark lantern in full focus upon my face. The rascal had stolen it out of the hall on the evening when, bothered out of my life fumbling over that stupid lamp, I forgot to close the street-door after B 1072. My latchkey was in the pocket. In my agony of mind, worn out by the sufferings of the day, it had quite escaped my memory to fasten the locks and bolts before going up stairs. The street-door had been left on the latch. Severe was my punishment. Terror threw me into a profuse perspiration, so perhaps it is lucky I did not spring to the ground, and grapple with the midnight ruffian, for I might have caught cold. Allowed him to depart, and then, slipping on my trousers, rushed down stairs after the vagabond. Cab drove up as I was listening on the first floor landing. Called lustily for help, when in rushed my dearest wife, my beloved Betsy, nearly fainting with alarm at finding the street-door open, and me in my nightgown roaring for assistance. Grand tableau. Another day, and I believe fright and starvation would have done their worst, and my Betsy would, on her return, have found to welcome her home a poor corpse stretched out on the drawing-room rug—a poor corpse black in the face from its last vain endeavours to light a fire.

CONCLUSION.—Policeman B 1072 caught the man escaping from the house. It was fortunate for him, as he thus preserved his own bacon. Recovered my watch and all my property, including the great-coat. In the pocket of the latter were found the keys that my wife had given me in the cab. Bessie extremely kind and attentive. She was excessively annoyed to think of the plunder Jane had extracted from me under the plea of housekeeping. Said I was close enough with her. Seemed vexed, I thought, that she had not had the chance. Said she only hoped the hussey would send to her for a character. She thought I was looking dreadfully thin and haggard—very likely I am. Bessie has faithfully promised me never to leave me all by myself in the house again. Her trip has done her great good; her spirits are excellent. She says I ought not to be trusted alone without my nurse. She also adds that no one is so unhappy as a pampered coddle of a husband who is left to manage for himself! I thought of adding that nothing is so selfish as to go out of town to amuse yourself, and take such little heed of the comforts of those left behind as to fill the house with bricklayers, painters, and sweeps. Certainly it enabled her to avoid the noise of falling bricks, the smell of paint, and the dirt of soot. But confound it! I don't like them any more than she does. However, to avoid words I kept these thoughts to myself, and when she called me a pampered coddle of a husband I only smiled and said, "Yes, my sweetest." HORACE MAYHEW.

CHRISTMAS DAY AT THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.

AMONGST all the festivities of Christmas in the metropolis the observance of the day at the Foundling Institution holds a conspicuous place. At this hospital there are about three hundred children who know no ties of natural relationship—who have no anxious fathers or mothers, no near connections (so far as they know)—to care for them or think for them on this joyous occasion. To these unhappy little ones the hospital is their only home; and trustees and managers stand in the stead of natural relations.

More than a hundred years ago one Captain Coram, who had accumulated a considerable fortune by trading to foreign parts, chanced, when he had long passed the prime of life, to reside at Rotherhithe. But business often caused him to visit the City. The road between those places was very different then and now: at that day it passed through a wide extent of fields and gardens. During these journeys of his Captain Coram frequently discovered young children, some living and some dead, who had been abandoned by unnatural parents. Shocked at this wilful destruction of human life, Captain Coram applied his vigorous will and hard-earned wealth to endeavour to find a shelter for unfortunate children. By dint of great personal exertions, and by expending his entire means, he at length erected a portion of the present building, and provided for the rearing of a limited number of children. These were in the first instance admitted by ballot, and so great was the throng of persons with children for admission that scenes of riot and confusion took place. After a time numbers of persons subscribed large sums, and the Government also assisted with large grants on condition that children should be admitted indiscriminately. A basket was hung at the gate, into which the little deserted creatures might be placed.

The fame of this institution spread not only through the metropolis, but throughout the country. Great abuses took place, and a regular trade was made of bringing children from distant places to the Foundling Hospital; numbers packed in panniers perished on the road, and others were foully murdered by those who had received money to bring them to town; and parishes began to avail themselves of the hospital as a means of getting rid of pauper progeny. But, great as was the loss of life out of doors, it was nothing in comparison with the fearful mortality which took place within, in consequence of overcrowding and the want of proper means to take care of such a large number of inmates. Fresh regulations were, however, made, and the Foundling Hospital has since continued to do its useful work.

The Foundling may also be considered to have been in some measure the nursery of both painting and music in England. At a very early period of the career of the institution Hogarth and several other painters associated themselves with Captain Coram in extending the usefulness of the establishment. Long before the commencement of the Royal Academy an artists' society was held within those walls, and many of its members presented the pictures which now decorate the principal rooms. When those works were arranged crowds of people of rank and fashion thronged to the place to view "The March to Finchley," by Hogarth, among other works. The Foundling Hospital may therefore be considered to have furnished the first public exhibition of paintings in England. Nor are its musical associations less interesting, for here Handel often presided over the execution of his finest oratorios, and by them large sums were raised, and applied to the purposes of the institution.

At any time of the year a visit to the Foundling is a matter of great interest. We look at the healthy, well-fed children, both boys and girls; we ramble through the pleasant playgrounds, which in summer time are gay with flowers and thick foliage, and even in winter time have a pleasing aspect; through the play-galleries, well-ventilated dormitories; the schools, so ably presided over by eleven teachers; the apartments in which Hogarth and other famous men have so often met; and then the mind wanders to those dark lanes and alleys of

London—to those dens of poverty and vice—how great is the contrast between those so unfortunately circumstanced and the children here sheltered!

The fair score of Handel's "Messiah," autographs of the founder, Hogarth, &c., have great interest, as also have the various articles which have been left in former times by those who have brought children in order that they might be able to recognise them in after-years. Here are coral crosses, a necklace, marked coins of silver and gold, rings, lockets, and other trinkets. The children are, however, claimed, and these relics are stored as curiosities. The books of the Foundling contain numerous records of the dresses of children admitted before the alteration of the rules referred to. Some were clad in costly lace and embroidery, others in rough sackcloth, and some totally naked. There are some instances of persons who have been reared here who have risen to wealth and position and who have been desirous of discovering their parentage. Amongst these may be mentioned a banker who made a large fortune in the north of England, and towards the close of his life he wished to discover his relations, but on investigation it was discovered that he had been dropped into the basket totally naked.

Hundreds of persons who have been children here, but who now hold influential situations, and others who are members of the Army and Navy, think at Christmas time of the dinner at the Foundling on that day, of the pleasant hours spent in the preparation of the decorations of the various apartments, and of those who had become as brothers by this chance association. Evergreens, artificial flowers, and bright-coloured streamers are hung and festooned; the names of the Queen and Duke of Cambridge, the patrons of the charity, are properly emblazoned; and the scene presented in the long dining-galleries is cheerful and picturesque. Lines of tables covered with snow-white clothes stretch in long perspective. These are neatly ornamented and spread with seasonable provisions; at the appointed time the master takes the head of the table, surrounded by some tried supporters of the establishment. A signal is given, and music is heard without, and soon the boys, headed by the juvenile band, march into the dining-room. After this a signal for silence is given, and then the musicians play a solemn strain, and the whole of those foundlings, with hands upraised and clasped, join in chanted grace, in prayer and thankfulness.

The worthy founder rests below the hall, and his fellow-workmen are now returned to dust; but their good still exists, and numbers have already had, and thousands yet unknown will have, reason to honour the memory of Captain Coram and his friends.

CHRISTMAS GIFT-BOOKS.

THE magnificence of the illustrated books which the close of each year brings forth for the special benefit of benevolent parents and godparents, and for the still greater advantage of deserving children and godchildren, appears this winter to be greater than ever. There is also a marked increase in the number published of these richly-ornamented, highly-ornamental volumes, and their annual production seems now to form part of the regular business of "all respectable booksellers," and especially of Messrs. Routledge, Messrs. Kent, Messrs. Sampson Low, and latterly Messrs. Houlston and Wright. It is curious to observe how many artists and artificers are employed in the "getting up" (to borrow an appropriate theatrical expression) of any one of these elaborate pictorial editions. To begin with, it is of course necessary to have something to illustrate, and for the basis of the work it is usual to take some celebrated poem or poems whose author frequently plays the same part in the gorgeous exhibition of which he is made the cause that Shakespeare did in the Shakespearean revivals at the Princess Theatre. Some editor with a well-known name—the Rev. Robert Aris Wilmot, for instance—is the Charles Keane of the affair—that is to say, he selects, arranges, annotates, and, if in a generous mood, explains in a preface how he has benefited the author by the changes and excisions he has made in the original text. The poem or poems, as revised, are then sent sometimes to as many as twenty artists, who are selected not by reason of any faculty attributed to them of interpreting poetry in a poetical spirit, but with a strict regard to the special executive qualities possessed by each. Stanzas descriptive of natural scenery are intrusted to one gentleman; lines suggestive of figure-pieces to another; and, if a dog, a wolf, or a squirrel can be caught in any part of the poem—be it merely as one of the terms of a simile—the unfortunate beast is at once handed over to a professed animal-painter, to be made the principal subject of a design on wood. The only thing that can be said in favour of this system is that it is easy to find skilful artists who can draw and compose any number of agreeable little pictures in the particular style which each has cultivated, while, to illustrate a poet worthily and in the true spirit, it would be necessary that the illustrator should be capable of entering heart and soul into his conceptions, which is, perhaps, more than we have a right to expect, and certainly more than, except in a very few instances, we are likely to find.

In addition to the artists who illustrate "the book," as the word is usually understood in the present day, there are those who execute the head and tail pieces, and who frequently display much fancy and originality in their ornamental designs. Then there are the wood-cutters, of whom, in most cases, a large number seem to work together, under the direction of some celebrated xylographer-in-chief, and of whom there are often two sets, one for the illustrative pictures, and the other for the decorative devices.

The printer, too, must be no ordinary typographer, but must have a keen eye for all the niceties of his art, and must be thoroughly versed in all the mysteries of "bringing-up" cuts, without which all the merit of the designer and wood-engraver, however great, would go for nothing.

Finally, there is the binder—unless the ornamentation of book-covers has already become an art by itself, as otherwise it doubtless will before long. However, taking it altogether, the binding would be really the best part of some of these handsome volumes but for the fact that hitherto the publishers have been judicious enough, in most cases, to select for pictorial and decorative honours the greatest works in our literature; but there must necessarily be an end to this, and it may be predicted that, as the outskirts of these gift-books continue to increase in splendour, so in the beauty of their contents there will gradually be a falling off. Even now the binder is fully (and justly) aware of his importance, and publicly affixes his name to those volumes of which he has most reason to be proud. Does not this remind some of our readers of a recent lawsuit in Paris in which a stage-carpenter established his right to have his name announced as one of the authors of a fairy piece for which he had designed some very elaborate and successful scenic effects?

We have said that, before long, the public must expect the works of minor poets to be laid under contribution by the editors of illustrated gift-books. We find an exemplification of this in a volume of poems, magnificently illustrated, which Messrs. Routledge have just published, under the auspices of the Rev. Robert Aris Wilmot. This gentleman, who edits a certain number of poetical collections every Christmas, cannot, of course, always be dealing with the works of one of our greatest poets, and he has already come down to James Montgomery, of whom, however, he says truthfully enough, "His seat in the Temple of Fame may not be among the highest, but it is safe, and he will always have his tablet on the wall." We fancy that the great majority of the public have already ceased to take an interest in James Montgomery's more ambitious productions, but he will long be remembered by his "Common Lot" (which we do not think, however, with the accomplished editor, deserves to be bound in the same volume with Gray's "Elegy"), and, above all, by "The Grave," which has more traces of genuine inspiration than any other poem by the same author. In the edition before us some omissions have been made in "The West Indies," "Greenland," and "The World before the Flood," but "The Pelican Island" is given almost entire. The volume contains a brief essay on the life and writings of the poet, in the shape of a preface, which is decidedly interesting, and in some respects instructive. It is remarkable how James Montgomery, without ceasing to write poetry, led, from manhood until his death, what every one would consider an

eminently practical life. He was the editor of the *Sheffield Iris* for thirty-one years, and was for a considerable period chairman of a gas company! He was consulted in reference to popular education by Lord Brougham, and he was pensioned by Sir Robert Peel. On the other hand, his poems were "cut up" by Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh*, and he was twice imprisoned in York Castle. In neither instance (we speak of his having been twice imprisoned) had he committed any offence against good morals, and his first incarceration was due to his not having complied with some formality required by the stringent laws which, until a comparatively recent period, crippled the press in England, as in other countries. The "Poems of James Montgomery," form one large volume, richly and tastefully bound, and elaborately illustrated with a hundred designs by John Gilbert, J. Wolf, Birket Foster, Duncan, Pickersgill, Harvey, and Harrison Weir. The engraving has been executed by the brothers Dalziel.

In the "Book of Favourite Modern Ballads" (Kent and Co.) we find the most varied specimens of a kind of poetry in which England is especially rich—Southey's "Inchcape Bell" and Longfellow's "Excelsior," Goldsmith's "Edwin and Angelina," and Kingsley's "Three Fishermen" (in which the scene of the three wives looking out into the storm is very dramatically rendered by Mr. A. Solomon), Wordsworth's poems on "Yarrow" (visited and unvisited), and Thornebury's "Rupert's March," &c. In illustrating a collection of ballads a number of artists can work together without the same discordant effect which is usually produced when one complete poem is given into the hands of ten or twelve illustrators, to be treated in different places, in the most diverse manner, according to the temperament and intellectual peculiarities of each. The rule in producing this work has been to give to each his own ballad—the artists being Birket Foster, Skelton, Horsley, Duncan, Thomas, Corbould, Cope, Harvey, &c.

In "Metrical Tales and other Poems," by Samuel Lover, illustrated by W. Harvey, H. K. Browne, Kenny Meadows, F. Skill, and P. Skelton (Houlston and Wright), we find one of the few original works of the present winter. Ten years since Dickens, Thackeray, and some twenty other writers whose names we cannot be expected to remember, published "Christmas Books" as a matter of course, and the fashion lasted until very lately—in fact, until it was put an end to, as it would appear, by the present rage for illustrated volumes with resplendent bindings. Messrs. Houlston and Wright, however, give us a book which is not only splendidly illustrated and bound, but is also thoroughly original, and the work, moreover, of one of the most popular and deservedly successful authors of the day. In "Metrical Tales and other Poems" we find three highly-interesting narratives ("versified and diversified," as the author says somewhere) entitled "The Fisherman," "Father Roach," and "The Blacksmith;" with "The Crooked Stick" (the well-known story of the young lady who, after rejecting a whole grove of admirers because not one was sufficiently straight to please her, had at last to accept the crookedest stick in the forest), a new version of the fable of "Love and Death" (which Kenny Meadows has adorned with one of his thoughtful and fanciful designs), &c. "The Fisherman," "Father Roach," and "The Blacksmith," are excellent tales; and the last of the three possesses great dramatic interest, though it would not bear narration in our prose and in the very few lines which would be all we could give to it. "Father Roach" is the story of an Irish priest, who, having received the confession of his brother's murderer, is too conscientious to give the assassin up to justice until at last full proofs of the crime are obtained from another source. "The Fisherman" is a lad on the coast of Galway, who, when he has just saved from a wreck a prize which would enable him to marry his cushma ma chree (if that be the way to spell it), abandons the treasure to save a drowning sailor, who afterwards turns out to be his brother.

"Hiawatha," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, illustrated by G. Thomas (Kent and Co.), is a volume which, its poetical merit apart, has the advantage of being illustrated throughout by the same artist, who in such a case must, if he has any feeling for art, endeavour to identify himself with the poet, and not merely to represent from an external point of view the scenes and personages of the poem. Accordingly, Mr. G. Thomas, in his "Hiawatha," surpasses all that he has done in the numerous Christmas volumes where he appears simply as a casual contributor. Until within the last few years it was commonly said of American literature by English and foreign critics that it was only an imitation, more or less successful, of the literature of England. This was especially true of Longfellow, though, while reproducing the forms and copying the manner of English poets, he sometimes took subjects from the Germans. "Hiawatha," however, belongs thoroughly to the New World, and deals with the legends, customs, and religious belief of its oldest inhabitants. Mr. G. Thomas has entered fully into the spirit of this poetic romance, and has adorned it with some very beautiful and very appropriate pictures. Among these we may mention the numerous fantastic or (Indian) mythological illustrations, the representation of Minnehaha by the side of her father, the ancient arrow-maker, the merry Pau-Puk-Keewis dancing, the said Pau-Puk-Keewis playing at bowls—

—tired of all this talking,
Tired of all Iago's stories,
Tired of Hiawatha's wisdom;

and, above all, the death of the charming Minnehaha, or rather the picture of Minnehaha dead with the despondent Hiawatha by her side who—

Seven long days and nights he sat there
Speechless, motionless, unconscious
Of the daylight or the darkness.

"Pearls of Shakspeare," a collection of the most brilliant passages found in his plays, illustrated by Kenny Meadows (Cassell and Co.), is far from being the most magnificent, though undoubtedly the best as regards illustration, in an intellectual and poetic sense, of all the volumes before us. There are many artists who could illustrate a dull writer better than Mr. Kenny Meadows, who is nothing if not perceptive and imaginative. When there is nothing to perceive, to imagine, and to suggest, any skilful or unskilful pencil can trace the representation of some object mentioned by the so-called poet; but, except Mr. Kenny Meadows, no artist has ever attempted to grapple with the genius of Shakspeare, who (to adopt the expression of Rivarol in reference to Delille's translation of Virgil) has not come away "lame, like Jacob when he wrestled with an angel." Hundreds of artists have drawn and painted scenes and characters from Shakspeare, but Kenny Meadows alone has entered into his deepest meaning and reproduced the spirit of his poetry, which in some places he not only reproduces but really intensifies. The line in "Richard III."—

And with a virtuous visor hide deep vice—

suggests to Mr. Meadows a profligate concealing his features behind a mask of the Saviour crowned with thorns. The diabolical perfidy of Angelo in "Measure for Measure" is indicated by a human figure, whose shadow is that of Satan. In illustration of the verses on Death in "Cymbeline," who,

being an ugly monster,
'Tis strange he hides him in fresh cups, soft beds,
Sweet words, &c.,

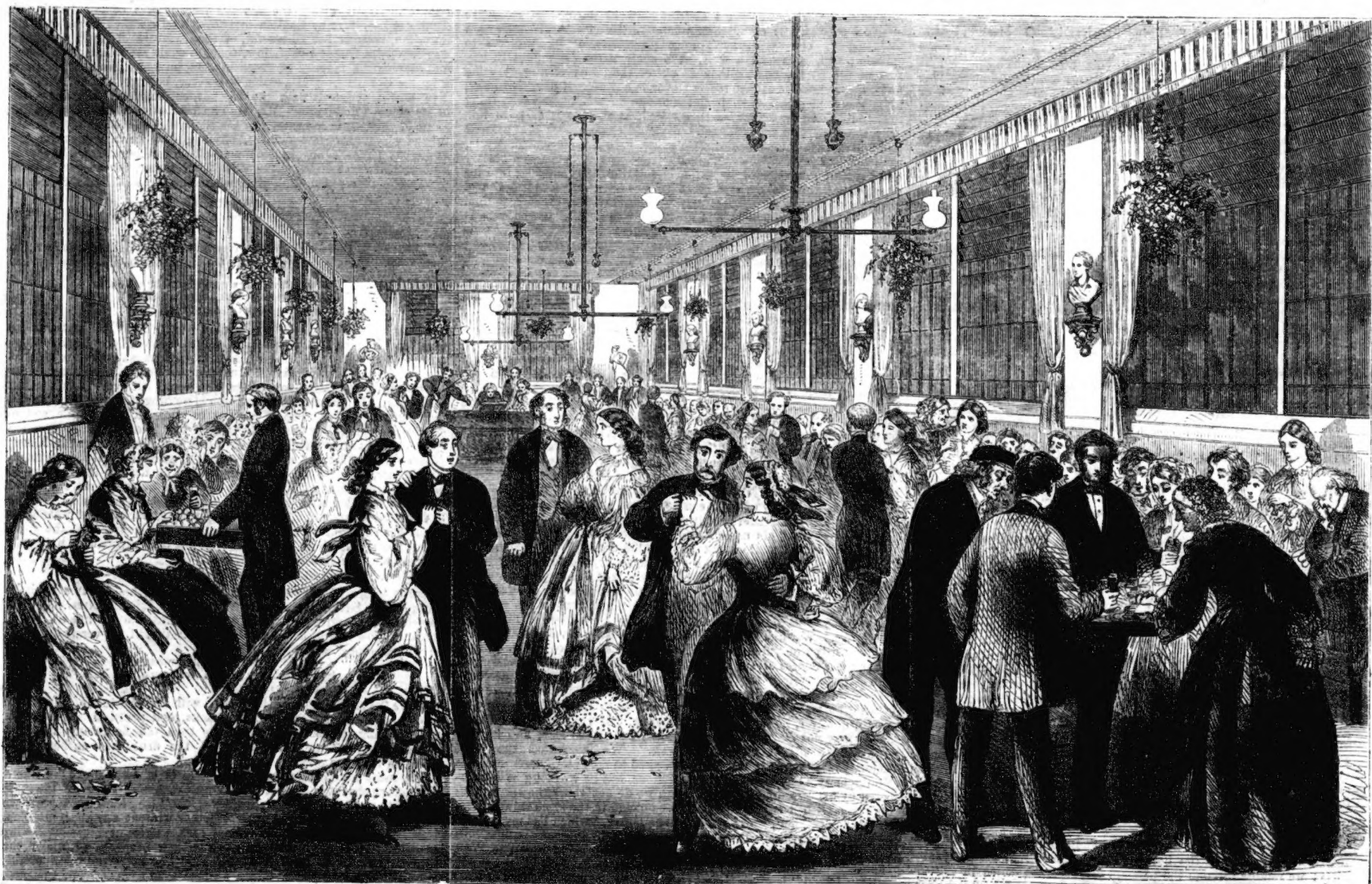
we have the emblems of death mingled with the elements of a feast in a mode which is equally novel, ingenious, and practical. In another style nothing can be more admirable than the figure of Caliban in "The Tempest," or the picture of the drunkards enchanted by Ariel, in the same play.

We must not take leave of the "Pearls of Shakspeare" without mentioning that it is far better arranged than most works of the same kind. In most of the "Beauties," "Gems," &c., from Shakspeare we find a number of passages strung together without any apparent plan. Here, however, the selections from each particular play—extending sometimes to entire scenes—are given in their proper order, under the title of the work to which they belong. The notes are often useful, but in one or two places they are worse than useless. For instance, to "incarnadine" does not, as the annotator asserts, mean "to stain of a flesh colour," and evidently not in these lines from "Macbeth"—

The multitudinous seas incarnadine
Making the green one red.



CHRISTMAS DINNER AT THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.



CHRISTMAS BALL AT BETHLEM HOSPITAL.—(SEE PAGE 411.)